

THE
ODYSSEY
OF
HOMER.

Translated by
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VOLUME THE SECOND.

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THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

The adventures of the Cicons, Lotophagi, and Cyclops.

Ulysses begins the relation of his adventures; how after the destruction of Troy, he with his companions made an incursion on the Cicons, by whom they were repulsed; and meeting with a storm, were driven to the coast of the Lotophagi. From thence they sailed to the land of the Cyclops, whose manners and situation are particularly characterised. The giant Polyphemus and his cave described; the usage Ulysses and his companions met with there; and lastly, the method and artifice by which he escaped.

THEN thus Ulysses. Thou, whom first in sway,
As first in virtue, these thy realms obey;
How sweet the products of a peaceful reign!
The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting strain;

* As we are now come to the episodical part of the *Odyssey*, it may be thought necessary to speak something of the nature of episodes.

As the action of the epic is always one, entire, and great action; so the most trivial episodes must be so interwoven with it, as to be necessary parts, or convenient, as Mr. Dryden observes, to carry on the main design; either so necessary, as without them the poem must be imperfect, or so convenient, that no others can be imagined more suitable to the place in which they stand: there is nothing to be left void in a firm building, even the cavities ought not to be filled up with rubbish destructive to the strength of it, but with materials of the same kind, though of less pieces, and fitted to the main fabric.

The well-fill'd palace, the perpetual feast,
A land rejoicing, and a people blest!

Aristotle tells us, that what is comprehended in the first platform of the fable is proper, the rest is episode: let us examine the *Odyssey* by this rule: the ground-work of the poem is, a prince absent from his country several years, Neptune hinders his return, yet at last he breaks through all obstacles, and returns, where he finds great disorders, the authors of which he punishes, and restores peace to his kingdoms. This is all that is essential to the model; this the poet is not at liberty to change; this is so necessary, that any alteration destroys the design, spoils the fable, and makes another poem of it. But episodes are changeable; for instance, though it was necessary that Ulysses being absent should spend several years with foreign princes, yet it was not necessary that one of these princes should be Antiphates, another Alcinous, or that Circe or Calypso should be the persons who entertained him: it was in the poet's choice to have changed these persons and states, without changing his design or fable. Thus though these adventures or episodes become parts of the subject after they are chosen, yet they are not originally essential to the subject. But in what sense then are they necessary? The reply is, Since the absence of Ulysses was absolutely necessary, it follows that not being at home, he must be in some other country; and therefore though the poet was at liberty to make use of none of these particular adventures, yet it was not in his choice to make use of none at all; if these had been omitted, he must have substituted others, or else he would have omitted part of the matter contained in his model, viz. the adventures of a person long absent from his country; and the poem would have been defective. So that episodes are not actions, but parts of an action. It is in poetry, as Aristotle observes, as in painting; a painter puts many actions into one piece, but they all conspire to form one entire and perfect action: a poet likewise uses many episodes, but all those episodes taken separately finish nothing, they are but imperfect members, which altogether make one and the same action, like the parts of a human body, they all conspire to constitute the whole man.

In a word, the episodes of Homer are complete episodes; they are proper to the subject, because they are drawn from the ground of the fable; they are so joined to the principal action, that one is the necessary consequence of the other, either truly or probably: and lastly, they are imperfect members which do not make a complete and finished body; for an episode that makes a complete action, cannot be part of a principal action; as is essential to all episodes.

An episode may then be defined, "A necessary part of an action, extended by probable circumstances." They are part of an action, for they are not added to the principal action, but only dilate and

How goodly seems it, ever to employ
Man's social days in union and in joy ;

amplify that principal action : thus the poet to shew the sufferings of Ulysses brings in the several episodes of Polyphemus, Scylla, the Syrens, &c. But why should the words, " extended by probable " circumstances," enter the definition ? Because the sufferings of Ulysses are proposed in the model of the fable in general only, but by relating the circumstances, the manner how he suffered is discovered ; and this connects it with the principal action, and shews very evidently the necessary relation the episode bears to the main design of the Odyssey. What I have said, I hope, plainly discovers the difference between the episodic and principal action, as well as the nature of episodes. See Bossu more largely upon this subject.

v. 3. *How sweet the products of a peaceful reign, &c.*] This passage has given great joy to the critics, as it has afforded them the ill-natured pleasure of railing, and the satisfaction of believing they have found a fault in a good writer. It is fitter, say they, for the mouth of Epicurus than for the sage Ulysses, to extol the pleasures of feasting and drinking in this manner : he whom the poet proposes as the standard of human wisdom, says Rapin, suffers himself to be made drunk by the Phæacians. But it may rather be imagined, that the critic was not very sober when he made the reflection ; for there is not the least appearance of a reason for that imputation. Plato indeed in his third book de Repub. writes, that what Ulysses here speaks is no very proper example of temperance ; but every body knows that Plato with respect to Homer, wrote with great partiality. Athenæus in his twelfth book gives us the following interpretation. Ulysses accommodates his discourse to the present occasion ; he in appearance approves of the voluptuous lives of the Phæacians, and having heard Alcinous before say, that feasting and singing, &c. was their supreme delight ; he by a reasonable flattery seems to comply with their inclinations : it being the most proper method to attain his desires of being conveyed to his own country. He compares Ulysses to the Polypus, which is fabled to assume the colour of every rock to which he approaches : thus Sophocles,

Νόει πρὸς ἀνδρὶ σῶμα Πηλύκε, ἔπως

Πίττα τράπεσθαι γνησίῳ φρονήματι.

That is, " In your accesses to mankind observe the Polypus, and " adapt yourself to the humour of the person to whom you apply." Eustathius observes that this passage has been condemned, but he defends it after the very same way with Athenæus.

It is not impossible but that there may be some compliance with the nature and manners of the Phæacians, especially because Ulysses is always described as an artful man, not without some mixture

The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine,
And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine! 10

Amid these joys, why seeks thy mind to know
Th' unhappy series of a wand'rer's woe;
Remembrance sad, whose image to review,
Alas! must open all my wounds anew?

And oh, what first, what last shall I relate, 15
Of woes unnumber'd sent by heav'n and fate?

Know first the man (tho' now a wretch distress'd)
Who hopes thee, monarch, for his future guest.

of dissimulation: but it is no difficult matter to take the passage literally, and give it an irreproachable sense. Ulysses had gone through innumerable calamities, he had lived to see a great part of Europe and Asia laid desolate by a bloody war; and after so many troubles, he arrives among a nation that was unacquainted with all the miseries of war, where all the people were happy, and passed their lives with ease and pleasures: this calm life fills him with admiration, and he artfully praises what he found praise-worthy in it; namely, the entertainments and music, and passes over the gallantries of the people, as Dacier observes, without any mention. Maximus Tyrius fully vindicates Homer. It is my opinion, says that author, that the poet, by representing these guests in the midst of their entertainments, delighted with the song and music, intended to recommend a more noble pleasure than eating and drinking, such a pleasure as a wise man may imitate, by approving the better part, and rejecting the worse, and chusing to please the ear rather than the belly. 12 Dissert.

If we understand the passage otherwise, the meaning may be this. I am persuaded, says Ulysses, that the most agreeable end which a king can propose, is to see a whole nation in universal joy, when music and feasting are in every house, when plenty is on every table, and wines to entertain every guest: this to me appears a state of the greatest felicity.

In this sense Ulysses pays Alcinous a very agreeable compliment; as it is certainly the most glorious aim of a king to make his subjects happy, and diffuse an universal joy through his dominions: he must be a rigid censor indeed who blames such pleasures as these, which have nothing contrary in them to virtue and strict morality; especially as they here bear a beautiful opposition to all the horrors which Ulysses had seen in the wars of Troy, and shew Phæacia as happy as Troy was miserable. I will only add, that this agrees with the oriental way of speaking; and in the poetical parts of the scriptures, the voice of melody, feasting and dancing, are used to express the happiness of a nation.

Behold Ulysses! no ignoble name,
Earth sounds my wisdom, and high heav'n my fame. 20

v. 19. *Behold Ulysses!* ———] The poet begins with declaring the name of Ulysses: the Phæacians had already been acquainted with it by the song of Demodocus, and therefore it could not fail of raising the utmost attention and curiosity (as Eustathius observes) of the whole assembly, to hear the story of so great a hero. Perhaps it may be thought that Ulysses is ostentatious, and speaks of himself too favourably; but the necessity of it will appear, if we consider that Ulysses had nothing but his personal qualifications to engage the Phæacians in his favour. It was therefore requisite to make those qualifications known, and this was not possible to be done but by his own relation, he being a stranger among strangers. Besides, he speaks before a vain-glorious people, who thought even boasting no fault. It may be questioned whether Virgil be so happy in those respects, when he puts almost the same words into the mouth of Æneas;

“Sum pius Æneas, raptos qui ex hoste penates
“Classe veho mecum, famâ super æthera notus:”

For his boast contributes nothing to the re-establishment of his affairs, for he speaks to the goddess Venus. Yet Scaliger infinitely prefers Virgil before Homer, though there be no other difference in the words, than “raptos qui ex hoste penates,” instead of

———“Ὅς πᾶσι δόλοισιν
Ἀνθρώποισι μέλω. ———

He questions whether subtilties, or δόλοι, ever raised any person's glory to the heavens; whereas that is the reward of piety. But the word is to be understood to imply wisdom, and all the stratagems of war, &c. according to the first verse of the Odyssey.

The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd.

He is not less severe upon the verses immediately preceding.

τοὶ δ' ἐμὰ κῆδε θυμὸς ἐπείραπτο γονόνηα, &c.

which lines are undoubtedly very beautiful, and admirably express the number of the sufferings of Ulysses; the multitude of them is so great, that they almost confound him; and he seems at a loss where to begin, how to proceed, or where to end; and they agree very well with the proposition in the opening of the Odyssey, which was to relate the sufferings of a brave man. These verses which Scaliger quotes are

“Infandum regina jubes renovare dolorem;
“Trojanas ut opes, &c.”

“Omnia sanè non sine suâ divinitate;” and he concludes, that Virgil has not so much imitated Homer, as taught us how Homer ought to have wrote.

My native foil is Ithaca the fair,
 Where high Neritus waves his woods in air :
 Dulichium, Samè, and Zacynthus crown'd
 With shady mountains, spread their isles around.
 (These to the north and night's dark regions run, 25
 Those to Aurora and the rising sun.)
 Low lies our isle, yet blest in fruitful stores ;
 Strong are her sons, tho' rocky are her shores ;
 And none, ah none so lovely to my sight,
 Of all the lands that heav'n o'erspreads with light ! 30
 In vain Calypso long constrain'd my stay,
 With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;

v. 21. ———— *Ithaca the fair,*
Where high Neritus, &c.]

Eustathius gives various interpretations of this position of Ithaca ; some understand it to signify that it lies low ; others explain it to signify that it is of low position, but high with respect to the neighbouring islands ; others take *πανυπερίατη* (excellentissima) in another sense to imply the excellence of the country, which though it lies low, is productive of brave inhabitants, for Homer immediately adds *ἀγαθὴ κυροῖρόφθον*. Strabo gives a different exposition ; Ithaca is *χθαμαλλή*, as it lies near to the continent, and *πανυπερίατη*, as it is the utmost of all the islands towards the north, *πρὸς ἄρκτον*, for thus *πρὸς ζόφον* is to be understood. So that Ithaca, adds he, is not of a low situation, but as it lies opposed to the continent, nor the most lofty (*ὑψηλότατη*) but the most extreme of the northern islands ; for so *πανυπερίατη* signifies. Dacier differs from Strabo in the explication of *πρὸς ἥν τ' ἡέλιόν τε*, which he believes to mean the south ; she applies the words to the east, or south-east, and appeals to the maps which so describe it. It is the most northern of the islands, and joins to the continent of Epirus ; it has Dulichium on the east, and on the south Samos and Zacynthus.

v. 31. *In vain Calypso* —] Eustathius observes, that Ulysses repeats his refusal of the goddesses Calypso and Circe in the same words, to shew Alcinous, by a secret denial, that he could not be induced to stay from his country, or marry his daughter : he calls Circe *Δολέεσσα*, because she is skilled in magical incantations : he describes Ithaca with all its inconveniencies, to convince Alcinous of his veracity, and that he will not deceive him in other circumstances, when he gives so disadvantageous a character of a country for which he expresses so great a fondness ; and lastly, in relating the death of his friends, he seems to be guilty of a tautology, in *θάνατόν τε μόρον τε*. But Aulus Gellius gives us the reason of it,

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With all her charms as vainly Circe strove,
And added magic, to secure my love.

In pomps or joys, the palace or the grot,

35

My country's image never was forgot,

My absent parents rose before my sight,

And distant lay contentment and delight.

Hear then the woes, which mighty Jove ordain'd

To wait my passage from the Trojan land,

40

The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' shore,

Beneath cold Ismarus, our vessels bore.

We boldly landed on the hostile place,

And sack'd the city, and destroy'd the race,

"Atrocitatem rei his idem dicendo auxit, inculcavitque, non igitur
"illa ejusdem significationis repetitio, ignava & frigida videri
"debet."

v. 41. ——— to the Cicons' shore.] Here is the natural and true beginning of the *Odyssey*, which comprehends all the sufferings of Ulysses, and these sufferings take their date immediately after his leaving the shores of Troy; from that moment he endeavours to return to his own country, and all the difficulties he meets with in returning, enter into the subject of the poem. But it may then be asked, if the *Odyssey* does not take up the space of ten years, since Ulysses wastes so many in his return; and is not this contrary to the nature of epic poetry, which is agreed must not at the longest exceed the duration of one year, or rather campaign? The answer is, the poet lets all the time pass which exceeds the bounds of epic action, before he opens the poem; thus Ulysses spends some time before he arrives at the island of Circe, with her he continues one year, and seven with Calypso; he begins artificially at the conclusion of the action, and finds an opportunity to repeat the most considerable and necessary incidents which preceded the opening of the *Odyssey*; by this method he reduces the duration of it into less compass than the space of two months. This conduct is absolutely necessary, for from the time that the poet introduces his hero upon the stage, he ought to continue his action to the very end of it, that he may never afterwards appear idle or out of motion: this is verified in Ulysses; from the moment he leaves the island of Ogygia to the death of the suitors, he is never out of view, never idle; he is always either in action, or preparing for it, till he is re-established in his dominions. If the poet had followed the natural order of the action, he, like Lucan, would not have wrote an epic poem, but an history in verse.

v. 44. And sack'd the city ———] The poet assigns no reason why Ulysses destroys this city of the Ciconians, but we may

Their wives made captive, their possessions shar'd, 45
And ev'ry soldier found a like reward.

I then advis'd to fly; not so the rest,
Who staid to revel, and prolong the feast:
The fatted sheep and fable bulls they slay,
And bowls fly round, and riot wastes the day. 50

Meantime the Cicons, to their holds retir'd,
Call on the Cicons, with new fury fir'd;
With early morn the gather'd country swarms,
And all the continent is bright with arms:

Thick as the budding leaves or rising flow'rs 55
O'erspread the land, when spring descends in show'rs:
All expert soldiers, skill'd on foot to dare,
Or from the bounding courser urge the war.

Now fortune changes (so the fates ordain)
Our hour was come to taste our share of pain. 60
Close at the ships the bloody fight began,
Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.

Long as the morning sun increasing bright
O'er heav'n's pure azure spread the growing light,
Promiscuous death the form of war confounds, 65
Each adverse battle gor'd with equal wounds:

But when his ev'ning wheels o'erhung the main,
Then conquest crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.
Six brave companions from each ship we lost,
The rest escape in haste, and quit the coast. 70

learn from the Iliad that they were auxiliaries of Troy, book the second.

With great Euphemus the Ciconians move,
Sprung from Træzenian Cæus, lov'd of Jove.

And therefore Ulysses assaults them as enemies. Eustathius.

v. 69. *Six brave companions from each ship we lost.*] This is one of the passages which fell under the censure of Zoilus; it is very improbable, says that critic, that each vessel should lose six men exactly; this seems a too equal distribution to be true, considering the chance of battle. But it has been answered, that Ulysses had twelve vessels, and that in this engagement he lost seventy-

With sails outspread we fly th' unequal strife,
Sad for their loss, but joyful of our life.

Yet as we fled, our fellows rites we pay'd,
And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.

Meanwhile the god, whose hand the thunder forms, 75
Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heav'n with
storms:

Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,
And night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps.

Now here, now there, the giddy ships are borne,
And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn. 80

We furl'd the sail, we ply'd the lab'ring oar,
Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.

two soldiers; so that the meaning is, that taking the total of his loss, and dividing it equally through the whole fleet, he found it amounted exactly to six men in every vessel. This will appear to be a true solution, if we remember that there was a necessity to supply the loss of any one ship out of the others that had suffered less: so that though one vessel lost more than the rest, yet being recruited equally from the rest of the fleet, there would be exactly six men wanting in every vessel. Eustathius.

v. 74. *And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.*] This passage preserves a piece of antiquity: it was the custom of the Grecians, when their friends died upon foreign shores, to use this ceremony of recalling their souls, though they obtained not their bodies, believing by this method that they transported them to their own country: Pindar mentions the same practice,

Κέλῃται γὰρ ἐὰν
Ψυχὰν κόμισζαι Φρίξῃ, &c.

That is, "Phrixus commands thee to call his soul into his own country." Thus the Athenians, when they lost any men at sea, went to the shores, and calling thrice on their names, raised a cenotaph or empty monument to their memories; by performing which solemnity, they invited the shades of the departed to return, and performed all rites as if the bodies of the dead had really been buried by them in their sepulchres. Eustathius.

The Romans as well as the Greeks followed the same custom: thus Virgil,

" — — — Et magnâ manes ter voce vocavi."

The occasion of this practice arose from the opinion, that the souls of the departed were not admitted into the state of the happy, without the performance of the sepulchral solemnities.

Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
 O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.
 But the third morning when Aurora brings, 85
 We rear the masts, we spread the canvas wings;
 Refresh'd, and careless on the deck reclin'd,
 We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.
 Then to my native country had I sail'd :
 But the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd. 90
 Strong was the tide, which by the northern blast
 Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.
 Nine days our fleet th' uncertain tempest bore
 Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore :
 The tenth we touch'd by various errors tost, 95
 The land of Lotos, and the flow'ry coast.

v. 95. *The tenth we touch'd —*
The land of Lotos —]

This passage has given occasion for much controversy; for since the Lotophagi in reality are distant from the Malean cape twenty-two thousand five hundred stades, Ulysses must sail above two thousand every day, if in nine days he sailed to the Lotophagi. This objection would be unanswerable, if we place that nation in the Atlantic ocean; but Dacier observes from Strabo, that Polybius examined this point, and thus gives us the result of it. This great historian maintains, that Homer has not placed the Lotophagi in the Atlantic ocean, as he does the islands of Circe and Calypso, because it was improbable that in the compass of ten days the most favourable winds could have carried Ulysses from the Malean cape into that ocean; it therefore follows, that the poet has given us the true situation of this nation, conformable to geography, and placed it as it really lies, in the Mediterranean; now in ten days a good wind will carry a vessel from Malea into the Mediterranean, as Homer relates.

This is an instance that Homer sometimes follows truth without fiction, at other times disguises it. But I confess I think Homer's poetry would have been as beautiful if he had described all his islands in their true positions: his inconstancy in this point, may seem to introduce confusion and ambiguity, when the truth would have been more clear, and as beautiful in his poetry.

Nothing can better shew the great deference which former ages paid Homer, than these defences of the learned ancients; they continually ascribe his deviations from truth, (as in the instance before us) to design, not to ignorance; to his art as a poet, and not

We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,
 Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.
 Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,
 (An herald one) the dubious coast to view, 100
 And learn what habitants possess the place.
 They went, and found an hospitable race;
 Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest,
 They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast;
 The trees around them, all their fruit produce; 105
 Lotos, the name; divine, nectarious juice!

to want of skill as a geographer. In a writer of less fame, such relations might be thought errors, but in Homer they are either understood to be no errors, or if errors, they are vindicated by the greatest names of antiquity.

Eustathius adds, that the ancients disagree about this island: some place it about Cyrene, from Maurusia of the African moors: it is also named Meninx, and lies upon the African coast, near the lesser Syrtis. It is about three hundred and fifty stades in length, and somewhat less in breadth: it is also named Lotophagitis from Lotos.

v. 100. *An herald one.*] The reason why the poet mentions the herald in particular, is because his office was sacred; and by the common law of nations his person inviolable: Ulysses therefore joins an herald in this commission, for the greater security of those whom he sends to search the country. Eustathius.

v. 106. *Lotos.*] Eustathius assures us, that there are various kinds of it. It has been a question whether it is an herb, a root, or a tree: he is of opinion, that Homer speaks of it as an herb; for he calls it *ἄλθρον εἶδος*, and that the word *ἐπέκλεισται* is in its proper sense applied to the grazing of beasts, and therefore he judges it not to be a tree, or root. He adds, there is an Ægyptian Lotos, which, as Herodotus affirms, grows in great abundance along the Nile in the time of its inundations; it resembles (says that historian in his Euterpe) a lily; the Ægyptians dry it in the sun, then take the pulp out of it, which grows like the head of a poppy, and bake it as bread; this kind of it agrees likewise with the *ἄλθρον εἶδος* of Homer. Athenæus writes of the Lybian Lotos in the fourteenth book of his Deipnosophist; he quotes the words of Polybius in the twelfth book of his history, now not extant; that historian speaks of it as an eye-witness, having examined the nature of it. "The Lotos is a tree of no great height, rough and thorny: it bears a green leaf, somewhat thicker and broader than that of the bramble or briar; its fruit at first is like the ripe berries of the myrtle, both in size and colour, but when it ripens it turns to purple; it is then about the bigness of an olive;

(Thence call'd Lotophagi) which whoso tastes,
 Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,
 Nor other home nor other care intends,
 But quits his house, his country, and his friends : 110
 The three we sent, from off th' enchanting ground
 We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound :
 The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,
 Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.
 Now plac'd in order on their banks, they sweep 115
 The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep ;
 With heavy hearts we labour thro' the tide,
 To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untry'd.

The land of Cyclops first ; a savage kind,
 Nor tam'd by manners, nor by laws confin'd : 120

" it is round, and contains a very small kernel ; when it is ripe
 " they gather it, and bruising it among bread-corn, they put it up
 " into a vessel, and keep it as food for their slaves ; they dress it
 " after the same manner for their other domestics, but first take
 " out the kernel from it : it has the taste of a fig, or dates, but
 " is of a far better smell : they likewise make a wine of it, by
 " steeping and bruising it in water ; it has a very agreeable taste,
 " like wine tempered with honey. They drink it without mix-
 " ing it with water, but it will not keep above ten days, they
 " therefore make it only in small quantities for immediate use."
 Perhaps it was this last kind of Lotos, which the companions of
 Ulysses tasted ; and if it was thus prepared, it gives a reason why
 they were overcome with it ; for being a wine, it had the power
 of intoxication.

v. 114. *The charm once tasted, had return'd no more.*] It must be
 confessed, that the effects of this Lotos are extraordinary, and seem
 fabulous ; how then shall we reconcile the relation to credibility ?
 the foundation of it might perhaps be no more than this : the com-
 panions of Ulysses might be willing to settle amongst these Loto-
 phagi, being won by the pleasure of the place, and tired with a
 life of danger and the perils of seas. Or perhaps it is only an al-
 legory, to teach us that those who indulge themselves in pleasures,
 are with difficulty withdrawn from them, and want an Ulysses to
 lead them by a kind of violence into the paths of glory.

v. 119. *The land of Cyclops first.*] Homer here confines himself
 to the true geography of Sicily : for, in reality, a ship may easily
 sail in one day from the land of the Lotophagi to Sicily : these Cy-
 clops inhabited the western part of that island, about Drepane and
 Lilybæum. Bochart shews us, that they derive their name from

Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe and sow;
They all their products to free nature owe.

the place of their inhabitation; for the Phæacians call them Chek-lub, by contraction for Chek-lclub; that is, the gulf of Lilybæum, or the men who dwell about the Lilybæan gulf. The Greeks (who understood not the Phæacian language) formed the word Cyclop, from Chek-lub, from the affinity of sound; which word in the Greek language, signifying a circular eye, might give occasion to fable that they had but one large round eye in the middle of their foreheads. Dacier.

Eustathius tells us, that the eye of Cyclops is an allegory, to represent that in anger, or any other violent passion, men see but one single object, as that passion directs, or see but with one eye: *εἰς ἓν τι, καὶ μόνον ἑσθῶ*: and that passion transforms us into a kind of savages, and makes us brutal and sanguinary, like this Polypheme; and he that by reason extinguishes such a passion, may like Ulysses be said to put out that eye that made him see but one single object.

I have already given another reason of this fiction; namely their wearing a head-piece, or martial vizor, that had but one sight through it. The vulgar form their judgments from appearances; and a mariner, who passed these coasts at a distance, observing the resemblance of a broad eye in the forehead of one of these Cyclops, might relate it accordingly, and impose it as a truth upon the credulity of the ignorant: it is notorious that things equally monstrous have found belief in all ages.

But it may be asked if there were any such persons who bore the name of Cyclops? No less an historian than Thucydides informs us, that Sicily was at first possessed and inhabited by giants, by the Læstrigons and Cyclops, a barbarous and inhuman people: but he adds, that these savages dwelt only in one part of that island.

Cedrenus gives us an exact description of the Cyclops: *Ἐκείθεν Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐμπέπει Κύκλωπι ἐν Σικελίᾳ ὅν ἐν ὀφθαλμῷ, &c.* "Ulysses fell among the Cyclops in Sicily; a people not one-eyed, according to the mythologists, but men like other men, only of a more gigantic stature, and of a barbarous and savage temper." From this description, we may see what Homer writes as a poet, and what as an historian; he paints these people in general agreeably to their persons, only disguises some features, to give an ornament to his relation, and to introduce the marvellous, which demands a place chiefly in epic poetry.

What Homer speaks of the fertility of Sicily, is agreeable to history: it was called anciently "Romani imperii horreum." Pliny, lib. x. cap. 10. writes, that the Leontine plains bear for every grain of corn, an hundred. Diodorus Siculus relates in his history what Homer speaks in poetry, that the fields of Leontium yield wheat without the culture of the husbandman: he was an eye-witness, being a native of the island. From hence in general it may be ob-

The soil untill'd a ready harvest yields,
 With wheat and barley wave the golden fields,
 Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour, 125
 And Jove descends in each prolific show'r.
 By these no statutes and no rights are known,
 No council held, no monarch fills the throne,

served, that wherever we can trace Homer, we find, if not historic truth, yet the resemblance of it; that is, as plain truth as can be related without converting his poem into an history.

v. 127. *By these no statutes and no rights are known,
 No council held, no monarch fills the throne.]*

Plato (observes Spondanus) in his third book of laws, treats of government as practised in the first ages of the world; and refers to this passage of Homer; mankind was originally independant, every "master of a family was a kind of king of his family, and "reigned over his wife and children like the Cyclopeans," according to the expression of Homer,

Τοῖσιν δ' ὅτ' ἀγοραὶ βουλευόμενοι, ὅτε δέμιγες.

Aristotle likewise complains, that even in his times, in many places, men lived without laws, according to their own fancies, *ἥ ἕκαστος ὡς βούλεται, κυκλωπικῶς δέμιγεύων παίδων, ἢ ἀλόχῃ*, referring likewise to this passage of Homer.

Dacier adds from Plato, that after the deluge, three manners of life succeeded among mankind; the first was rude and savage; men were afraid of a second flood; and therefore inhabited the summits of mountains, without any dependance upon one another, and each was absolute in his own family: the second was less brutal; as the fear of the deluge wore away by degrees, they descended towards the bottom of mountains, and began to have some intercourse: the third was more polished; when a full security from the apprehensions of a flood was established by time, they then began to inhabit the plains, and a more general commerce by degrees prevailing, they entered into societies, and established laws for the general good of the whole community. These Cyclopeans maintained the first state of life in the days of Ulysses; they had no intercourse with other societies, by reason of their barbarities, and consequently their manners were not at all polished by the general laws of humanity. This account agrees excellently with the holy scriptures, and perhaps Plato borrowed it from the writings of Moses; after the deluge men retreated to the mountains for fear of a second flood; the chief riches, like these Cyclopeans, consisted in flocks and herds; and every master of a family ruled his house without any controul or subordination.

But high on hills or airy cliffs they dwell,
Or deep in caves whose entrance leads to hell. 130
Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,
Heedless of others, to his own severe.

Oppos'd to the Cyclopean coasts, there lay
An isle, whose hills their subject fields survey;
Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove, 135
Where savage goats thro' pathless thickets rove:
No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,
Or wretched hunters, thro' the wint'ry cold
Pursue their flight; but leave them safe to bound
From hill to hill, o'er all the desert ground. 140
Nor knows the soil to feed the fleecy care,
Or feels the labours of the crooked share;
But uninhabited, untill'd, unsown
It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone.
For there no vessel with vermilion prone, 145
Or bark of traffic, glides from shore to shore;
The rugged race of savages, unskill'd
The seas to traverse, or the ships to build,
Gaze on the coast, nor cultivate the soil;
Unlearn'd in all th' industrious arts of toil. 150

v. 129. *But high on hills — — or deep in caves.*] This is said, to give an air of probability to the revenge which Ulysses takes upon this giant, and indeed to the whole story. He describes his solitary life, to shew that he was utterly destitute of assistance; and it is for the same reason, continues Eustathius, that the poet relates that he left his fleet under a desert neighbouring island, namely to make it probable, that the Cyclops could not seize it, or pursue Ulysses, having no shipping.

v. 134. *An isle, whose hills, &c.*] This little isle is now called *Ægusa*, which signifies the isle of goats. Cluverius describes it after the manner of Homer, "*Prata mollia, & irrigua, solum fer-tile, portum commodum, fontes limpidos.*" It is not certain whether the poet gives any name to it; perhaps it had not received any in those ages, it being without inhabitants; though some take *λάχια* for a proper name, as is observed by Eustathius.

v. 144. *Bleating goat.*] It is exactly thus in the original, verse 124, *μυκάδας*, "*balantes*;" which Pollux, lib. v. observes not to be the proper term for the voice of goats, which is *φριμαγμας*.

Yet here all products and all plants abound,
 Sprang from the fruitful genits of the ground;
 Fields waving high with heavy crops are seen,
 And vines that flourish in eternal green,
 Refreshing meads along the murr'ring main, 155
 And fountains streaming down the fruitful plain.

A port there is, inclos'd on either side,
 Where ships may rest, unanchor'd and unty'd;
 'Till the glad mariners incline to sail,
 And the sea whitens with the rising gale. 160

High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock
 In living rills a gushing fountain broke:
 Around it, and above, for ever green
 The bushing alders form'd a shady scene.

Hither some fav'ring god, beyond our thought, 165
 Thro' all-surrounding shade our navy brought;

For gloomy night descended on the main,
 Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in th' ethereal plain:

But all unseen the clouded island lay,
 And all unseen the surge and rolling sea, 170 }
 'Till safe we anchor'd in the shelter'd bay:

Our sails we gather'd, cast our cables o'er,
 And slept secure along the sandy shore.

Soon as again the rosy morning shone,
 Reveal'd the landschape and the scene unknown, 175

With wonder seiz'd we view the pleasing ground,
 And walk delighted, and expatiate round.

v. 165. *Hither some fav'ring god* ———] This circumstance is inserted with great judgment, Ulysses otherwise might have landed in Sicily, and fallen into the hands of the Cyclopeans, and consequently been lost inevitably: he therefore piously ascribes his safety, by being driven upon this desolate island, to the guidance of the gods; he uses it as a retreat, leaves his navy there, and passes over into Sicily in one single vessel, undiscovered by these gigantic savages; this reconciles the relation to probability, and renders his escape practicable. Eustathius.

Rous'd by the woodland nymphs, at early dawn,
 The mountain goats came bounding o'er the lawn :
 In haste our fellows to the ships repair, 180
 For arms and weapons of the silvan war ;
 Straight in three squadrons all our crew we part,
 And bend the bow, or wing the missile dart ;
 The bounteous gods afford a copious prey,
 And nine fat goats each vessel bears away : 185
 The royal bark had ten. Our ships compleat
 We thus supply'd, (for twelve were all the fleet).
 Here, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
 We sat indulging in the genial rite :

v. 178. *The woodland nymphs.*] This passage is not without obscurity, and it is not easy to understand what is meant by "the daughters of Jupiter." Eustathius tells us, the poet speaks allegorically, and that he means to specify the plants and herbs of the field. Jupiter denotes the air, not only in Homer, but in the Latin poets. Thus Virgil.

" Tum pater omnipotens sæcundis imbribus Æther
 " Conjugis in gremium lætæ descendit ———"

and consequently the herbs and plants, being nourished by the mild air and fruitful rains, may be said to be the daughters of Jupiter, or offspring of the skies ; and these goats and beasts of the field, being fed by these plants and herbs, may be said to be awakened by the daughters of Jupiter, that is, they awake to feed upon the herbage early in the morning. *Κῆραι Διὸς, ἀλληγορικῶς αἱ τῶν φυτῶν ἀυξητικαὶ δυνάμεις, ἃς ὁ ζεὺς ποιεῖ.* Thus Homer makes deities of the vegetative faculties and virtues of the field. I fear such boldnesses would not be allowed in modern poetry.

It must be confessed that this interpretation is very refined : but I am sure it will be a more natural explication to take these for the real mountain nymphs (Oreades) as they are in many places of the *Odyssey* ; the very expression is found in the sixth book,

— — — *Νύμφαι κῆραι Διὸς* ———

and there signifies the nymphs attending upon Diana in her sports : and immediately after Ulysses, being awakened by a sudden noise, mistakes Nausicaa and her damsels for nymphs of the mountains or floods. This conjecture will not be without probability, if we remember that these nymphs were huntresses, as is evident from their relation to Diana. Why then may not this other expression be meant of the nymphs that are fabled to inhabit the mountains ?

Nor wines were wanting ; those from ample jars 190
We drained the prize of our Ciconian wars.

The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near ;
The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,
And from their mountains rising smokes appear. }

Now sunk the sun, and darkness cover'd o'er 195

The face of things : along the sea-beat shore

Satiate we slept : but when the sacred dawn

Arising glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,

I call'd my fellows, and these words address.

My dear associates, here indulge your rest : 200

While, with my single ship, advent'rous I

Go forth, the manners of yon men to try ;

Whether a race unjust, of barb'rous might,

Rude, and unconscious of a stranger's right ;

Or such who harbour pity in their breast, 205

Revere the gods, and succour the distressed ?

This said, I climb'd my vessel's lofty side ;

My train obey'd me and the ship unty'd.

In order seated on their banks, they sweep

Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the yielding deep.

When to the nearest verge of land we drew, 211

Fast by the sea a lonely cave we view,

v. 201. *While, with my single ship, advent'rous I.*] The reader may be pleased to observe, that the poet has here given the reins to his fancy, and run out into a luxuriant description of *Ægusa* and *Sicily* : he refreshes the mind of the reader with a pleasing and beautiful scene, before he enters upon a story of so much horror, as this of the Cyclops.

A very sufficient reason may be assigned, why *Ulysses* here goes in person to search this land : he dares not, as *Eustathius* remarks, trust his companions ; their disobedience among the *Ciconians*, and their unworthy conduct among the *Lotophagi*, have convinced him that no confidence is to be reposed in them : this seems probable, and upon this probability *Homer* proceeds to bring about the punishment of *Polypheme*, which the wisdom of *Ulysses* effects, and it is an action of importance, and consequently ought to be performed by the hero of the poem.

High, and with dark'ning laurels cover'd o'er;
 Where sheep and goats lay slumb'ring round the shore.
 Near this, a fence of marble from the rock, 215
 Brown with o'er-arching pine, and spreading oak.
 A giant-shepherd here his flock maintains
 Far from the rest, and solitary reigns,
 In shelter thick of horrid shade reclin'd;
 And gloomy mischiefs labour in his mind. 220
 A form enormous! far unlike the race
 Of human birth, in stature, or in face;

v. 221. *A form enormous! far unlike the race of human birth.*] Geopius Becanus, an Antwerpian, has wrote a large discourse to prove, that there never were any such men as giants; contrary to the testimony both of profane and sacred history: thus Moses speaks of the Rephaims of Aferoth, the Zamzummims of Ham, the Emims of Moab, and Anakims of Hebron. See Deut. ii. ver. 20. "That also was called a land of giants, it was a great people, and "tall as the Zamzummims." Thus Goliath must be allowed to be a giant, for he was six cubits and a span, that is, nine feet and a span in height; his coat of mail weighed five thousand shekels of brass, about one hundred and fifty pounds: (but I confess others understand the lesser shekel) the head of his spear alone weighed six hundred shekels of iron, that is, about eighteen or nineteen pounds. We find the like relations in profane history: Plutarch in his life of Theseus says, that age was productive of men of prodigious stature, giants. Thus Diodorus Siculus; "Ægyptii scribant, Isidiis ætate, fuisse vasto corpore homines, quos Græci dixere gigantes." Herodotus affirms that the body of Orestes was dug up, and appeared to be seven cubits long; but Aulus Gellius believes this to be an error. Josephus writes, l. xviii. c. 6. that Vitellius sent a Jew named Eleazar, seven cubits in height, as a present from Artabanus king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Cæsar; this man was ten feet and a half high. Pliny vii. 16. speaks of a man that was nine feet nine inches high; and in another place, vi. 30. "Syrtas, gentem Æthiopum Nomadum, octona cubita longitudo excedere."

Thus it is evident, that there have been men of very extraordinary stature in former ages. Though perhaps such instances were not frequent in any age or any nation. So that Homer only amplifies, not invents; and as there was really a people called Cyclopeans, so they might be men of great stature, or giants.

It may seem strange that in all ancient stories the first planters of most nations are recorded to be giants; I scarce can persuade myself but such accounts are generally fabulous; and hope to be pardoned for a conjecture which may give a seeming reason how such stories

As some lone mountain's monstrous growth he stood,
 Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.
 I left my vessel at the point of land, 325
 And close to guard it, gave our crew command :
 With only twelve the boldest and the best,
 I seek th' adventure, and forsake the rest.
 Then took a goatskin fill'd with precious wine, 330
 The gift of Maron of Evantheus' line, }
 (The priest of Phœbus at th' Iſmarian shrine.)
 In sacred shade his honour'd mansion stood
 Amidst Apollo's consecrated wood ;
 Him, and his house, heav'n mov'd my mind to save,
 And costly presents in return he gave ; 235

came to prevail. The Greeks were a people of very great antiquity ; they made many expeditions, as appears from Jason, &c. and sent out frequent colonies : now the head of every colony was called *Ἀναξ*, and these adventurers being persons of great figure in story, were recorded as men of war, of might and renown, through the old world : it is therefore not impossible but the Hebrews might form their word *Anac*, from the Greek *ἄναξ*, and use it to denote persons of uncommon might and abilities. These they called *Anac*, and sons of *Anac* ; and afterwards in a less proper sense used it to signify men of uncommon stature, or giants. So that in this sense, all nations may be said to be originally peopled by a son of *Anac*, or a giant. But this is submitted as a conjecture to the reader's judgment.

v. 229. *Precious wine, the gift of Maron.*] Such digressions as these are frequent in Homer, but I am far from thinking them always beauties : it is true, they give variety to poetry ; but whether that be an equivalent for calling off the attention of the reader from the more important action, and diverting it with small incidents, is what I much question. It is not indeed impossible but this Maron might have been the friend of Homer, and this praise of him will then be a monument of his grateful disposition ; and in this view a beauty. It must be confessed that Ulysses makes use of this wine to a very good effect, viz. to bring about the destruction of Polypheme, and his own deliverance ; and therefore it was necessary to set it off very particularly, but this might have been done in fewer lines. As it now stands, it is a little episode ; our expectations are raised to learn the event of so uncommon an adventure, when all of a sudden Homer breaks the story, and gives us a history of Maron. But I distrust my judgment much rather than Homer's.

Seven golden talents to perfection wrought,
 A silver bowl that held a copious draught,
 And twelve large vessels of unmingled wine,
 Mellifluous, undecaying, and divine!
 Which now some ages from his race conceal'd, 240
 The hoary fire in gratitude reveal'd;
 Such was the wine: to quench whose fervent steam,
 Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
 To cool one cup suffic'd: the goblet crown'd
 Breath'd aromatic fragrances around. 245
 Of this an ample vase we heav'd aboard,
 And brought another with provisions stor'd.
 My soul foreboded I should find the bow'r
 Of some fell monster, fierce with barb'rous pow'r,
 Some rustic wretch, who liv'd in heav'n's despight, 250
 Contemning laws, and trampling on the right.
 The cave we found, but vacant all within,
 (His flock the giant tended on the green)
 But round the grot we gaze; and all we view,
 In order rang'd, our admiration drew: 255

v. 243. *Scarce twenty measures from the living stream,
 To cool one cup suffic'd ————]*

There is no wine of so strong a body as to bear such a disproportionate quantity; but Homer amplifies the strength of it to prepare the reader for its surprising effects immediately upon Polypheme.

v. 250. *Some rustic wretch, who liv'd, &c.]* This whole passage must be considered as told by a person long after the adventure was past, otherwise how should Ulysses know that this cave was the habitation of a savage monster before he had seen him? And when he tells us that himself and twelve companions went to search, what people were inhabitants of this island? Eustathius and Dacier seem both to overlook this observation; for in a following note she condemns Ulysses for not flying from the island, as he was advised by his companions. But if, on the other hand, we suppose that Ulysses was under apprehensions, from the savageness of the place, of finding a savage race of people, it will be natural enough that his mind should forbode as much; and it appears from other passages, that this sort of instinctive presage was a favourite opinion of Homer's.

The bending shelves with loads of cheeses prest,
 The folded flocks each sep'rate from the rest.
 (The larger here, and there the lesser lambs,
 The new fall'n young here bleating for their dams;
 The kid distinguish'd from the lambkin lies :) 260

The cavern echoes with responsive cries.
 Capacious chargers all around were laid,
 Full pails, and vessels of the milking trade.
 With fresh provisions hence our fleet to store
 My friends advise me, and to quit the shore; 265
 Or drive a flock of sheep and goats away,
 Consult our safety, and put off to sea.
 Their wholesome counsel rashly I declin'd,
 Curious to view the man of monstrous kind,
 And try what social rites a savage lends : 270
 Dire rites alas! and fatal to my friends!

Then first a fire we kindle, and prepare
 For his return with sacrifice and pray'r.
 The loaden shelves afford us full repast;
 We sit expecting. Lo! he comes at last. 275
 Near half a forest on his back he bore,
 And cast the pond'rous burden at the door.
 It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,
 And sought the deep recesses of the den.
 Now driv'n before him, thro' the arching rock, 280
 Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, th' unnumber'd flock;
 Big-udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind,
 (The males were penn'd in outward courts behind)
 Then, heav'd on high, a rock's enormous weight
 To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and clos'd the gate. 285
 (Scarce twenty-four wheel'd cars, compact and strong,
 The massy load could bear, or roll along.)
 He next betakes him to his ev'ning cares,
 And sitting down, to milk his flocks prepares;
 Of half their udders eases first the dams, 290
 Then to the mother's teat submits the lambs.

Half the white stream to hard'ning cheese he prest,
 And high in wicker-baskets heap'd: the rest,
 Reserv'd in bowls, supply'd the nightly feast.
 His labour done, he fir'd the pile that gave

295

A sudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.
 We stand discovered by the rising fires,
 Askance the giant glâres, and thus'inquires.

What are ye, guests; on what adventure, say,
 Thus far ye wander thro' the watr'y way?
 Pirates perhaps, who seek thro' seas unknown
 The lives of others, and expose your own?

300

His voice like thunder thro' the cavern sounds:
 My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,
 Appall'd at sight of more than mortal man!
 At length, with heart recover'd, I began.

305

From Troy's fam'd fields, sad wand'ers o'er the
 main,

Behold the relics of the Grecian train!
 Thro' various seas by various vessels tost,
 And forc'd by storms, unwilling, on your coast;
 Far from our destin'd course, and native land,
 Such was our fate, and such high Jove's command!
 Nor what we are befits us to disclaim,
 Atrides' friends (in arms a mighty name)
 Who taught proud Troy and all her sons to bow;
 Victors of late, but humble suppliants now!

310

315

v. 307. *From Troy's fam'd fields, &c.*] This speech is very well adapted to make an impression upon Polypheme. Ulysses applies to move either his fears or his compassion; he tells him he is an unfortunate person, and comes as a suppliant; and if this prevails nothing, he adds, he is a subject of the great Agamemnon, who had lately destroyed a mighty kingdom: which is spoken to make him afraid to offer violence to the subject of a king who had power to revenge any injuries offered his people. To intimidate him further, he concludes with the mention of the gods, and in particular of Jupiter, as avengers of any breach of the laws of hospitality: these are arguments well chosen to move any person, but an inhuman Polypheme. Eustathius.

Low at thy knee thy succour we implore;
Respect us, human, and relieve us, poor.

At least some hospitable gift bestow;

'Tis what the happy to the unhappy owe: 320

'Tis what the gods require: those gods revere,
The poor and stranger are their constant care;
To Jove their cause and their revenge belongs,
He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.

Fools that ye are! (the savage thus replies, 325
His inward fury blazing at his eyes)

Or strangers, distant far from our abodes,
To bid me rev'rence or regard the gods.

Know then we Cyclops are a race, above
Those air-bred people, and their goat-nurs'd Jove: 330
And learn, our power proceeds with thee and thine,
Not as he wills, but as ourselves incline.

But answer, the good ship that brought ye o'er,
Where lies she anchor'd? near or off the shore?

Thus he. His meditated fraud I find, 335
(Vers'd in the turns of various human kind)

And cautious, thus. Against a dreadful rock,
Fast by your shore the gallant vessel broke,
Scarce with these few I 'scap'd; of all my train,
Whom angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main;
'The scatter'd wreck the winds blew back again. 341

He answer'd with his deed. His bloody hand
Snatch'd two, unhappy! of my martial band;
And dash'd like dogs against the stony floor: 344
The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore.

v. 344. *And dash'd like dogs ———*
The pavement swims, &c.

There is a great beauty in the versification in the original.

Σὺν δὲ δύο μάρψας, ὥς τε κύλακας ποτὶ γαίῃ
κόπτ' ἐκ δ' ἐπὶ κεφαλῇ χαμάδις ῥέε, δεῦτε δὲ γαίαν.

Dionysius Halicarn. takes notice of it, in his Dissertation upon placing words: when the companions of Ulysses, says that author,

Torn limb from limb, he spreads his horrid feast,
 And fierce devours it like a mountain beast:
 He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
 Nor entrails, flesh, nor solid bone remains.
 We see the death from which we cannot move, 350
 And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.
 His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,
 A milky deluge next the giant swill'd;
 Then stretch'd in length o'er half the cavern'd rock,
 Lay senseless and supine, amidst the flock. 355
 To seize the time, and with a sudden wound
 To fix the slumb'ring monster to the ground,
 My soul impels me; and in act I stand
 To draw the sword; but wisdom held my hand.
 A deed so rash had finish'd all our fate, 360
 No mortal forces from the lofty gate
 Could roll the rock, in hopeless grief we lay,
 And sigh, expecting the return of day.
 Now did the rosy finger'd morn arise,
 And shed her sacred light along the skies. 365
 He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,
 And to the mother's teats submits the lambs.
 The task thus finish'd of his morning hours,
 Two more he snatches, murders, and devours.

are dashed against the rock, to express the horror of the action, Homer dwells upon the most inharmonious harsh letters and syllables: he no where uses any softness, or any run of verses to please the ear. Scaliger injudiciously condemns this description; "Homer (says he) makes use of the most offensive and loathsome expressions, more fit for a butcher's shambles than the majesty of heroic poetry." Macrobius, lib. v. cap. 13. of his Saturnalia, commends these lines of Homer, and even prefers them before the same description in Virgil, his words are, "Narrationem facti nudam Maro posuit, Homerus *πάθος* miscuit, & dolore narrandi invidiam crudelitatis æquavit." And indeed he must be a strange critic that expects soft verses upon a horrible occasion, whereas the verses ought, if possible, to represent the thought they are intended to convey; and every person's ear will inform him that Homer has not in this passage executed this rule unsuccessfully.

Then pleas'd and whistling, drives his flock before ;
Removes the rocky mountain from the door, 371

And shuts again : with equal ease dispos'd,
As a light quiver's lid is op'd and clos'd.

His giant voice the echoing region fills :
His flocks, obedient, spread o'er all the hills. 375

Thus left behind, e'en in the last despair
I thought, devis'd, and Pallas heard my prayer.
Revenge, and doubt, and caution work'd my breast ;
But this of many counsels seem'd the best :

The monster's club within the cave I 'spy'd, 380

A tree of stateliest growth, and yet undry'd,
Green from the wood ; of height and bulk so vast,
The largest ship might claim it for a mast.

This shorten'd of its top, I gave my train
A fathom's length, to shape it and to plain ; 385

The narrow'r end I sharpen'd to a spire ;
Whose point we harden'd with the force of fire,
And hid it in the dust that strow'd the cave.

Then to my few companions, bold and brave,
Propos'd, who first the vent'rous deed should try, 390
In the broad orbit of his monstrous eye

To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,
When slumber next should tame the man of blood.

Just as I wish'd, the lots were cast on four :
Myself the fifth. We stand and wait the hour. 395

He comes with ev'ning : all his fleecy flock
Before him march, and pour into the rock :

v. 394. ——— *the lots were cast* ———] Ulysses bids his friends to cast lots ; this is done to shew that he would not voluntarily expose them to so imminent danger. If he had made the choice himself, they whom he had chosen might have thought he had given them up to destruction, and they whom he had rejected might have judg'd it a stain upon them as a want of merit, and so have complain'd of injustice ; but by this method he avoids these inconveniencies.

Not one, or male or female staid behind;
 (So fortune chanc'd, or so some god design'd)
 Then heaving high the stone's unwieldy weight, 400
 He roll'd it on the cave, and clos'd the gate.
 First down he sits, to milk the woolly dams,
 And then permits their udder to the lambs.
 Next seiz'd two wretches more, and headlong cast,
 Brain'd on the rock; his second dire repast. 405
 I then approach'd him reeking with their gore,
 And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er:
 Cyclop! since human flesh has been thy feast,
 Now drain this goblet, potent to digest:
 Know hence what treasures in our ship we lost, 410
 And what rich liquors other climates boast.
 We to thy shore the precious freight shall bear,
 If home thou send us, and vouchsafe to spare.
 But oh! thus furious, thirsting thus for gore,
 The sons of men shall ne'er approach thy shore, 415 }
 And never shalt thou taste this nectar more.

He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat
 Delighted, swill'd the large luxurious draught.
 More! give me more, he cry'd: the boon be thine,
 Whoe'er thou art that bear'st celestial wine! 420
 Declare thy name; not mortal is this juice,
 Such as th' unblest Cyclopean climes produce,
 (Tho' sure our vine the largest cluster yields,
 And Jove's scorn'd thunder serves to drench our fields)
 But this descended from the blest abodes, 425
 A rill of nectar, streaming from the gods.

v. 399. ——— or so some god design'd.] Ulysses ascribes it to the influence of the gods that Polypheme drives the whole flock into his den, and does not separate the females from the males as he had before done; for by this accident Ulysses makes his escape, as appears from the following part of the story. Homer here uses the word *δυσσάμενος*, to shew the suspicion which Polypheme might entertain that Ulysses had other companions abroad who might plunder his flocks; and this gives another reason why he drove them all into his cave, namely for the greater security.

He said, and greedy grasp'd the heady bowl,
 Thrice drain'd, and pour'd the deluge on his soul.
 His sense lay cover'd with the dozy fume;
 While thus my fraudulent speech I reassume. 430
 Thy promis'd boon, O Cyclop! now I claim,
 And plead my title: Noman is my name.
 By that distinguish'd from my tender years,
 'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.

The giant then. Our promis'd grace receive, 435
 The hospitable boon we mean to give:
 When all thy wretched crew have felt my pow'r,
 Noman shall be the last I will devour.

He said: then nodding with the fumes of wine,
 Dropt his huge head, and snoring lay supine. 440

v. 432. ——— *Noman is my name.*] I will not trouble the reader with a long account of *ἄνθρωπος* to be found in Eustathius, who seems delighted with this piece of pleasantry; nor with what Dacier observes, who declares she approves of it extremely, and calls it a very happy imagination. If it were modesty in me to dissent from Homer, and two commentators, I would own my opinion of it, and acknowledge the whole to be nothing but a collusion of words, and fitter to have place in a farce or comedy, than in epic poetry. Lucian has thus used it, and applied it to raise laughter in one of his facetious dialogues. The whole wit or jest lies in the ambiguity of *ἄνθρωπος*, which Ulysses imposes upon Polypheme as his own name, which in reality signifies "no man." I doubt not but Homer was well pleased with it, for afterwards he plays upon the word, and calls Ulysses *ἄνθρωπος ἄνθρωπος*. But the faults of Homer have a kind of veneration, perhaps like old age, from their antiquity.

Euripides has translated this whole passage in his tragedy called the Cyclops. The chorus begins thus, "Why dost thou thus cry out, Cyclops?" Cyc. "I am undone." Cho. "You seem to be in a woful condition." Cyc. "I am utterly miserable." Cho. "You have been drunk and fallen into the embers." Cyc. "No man has undone me." Cho. "Well then, No man has injured you." Cyc. "Noman has blinded me." Cho. "Then you are not blind."

This appears to me more fit for the two Sosias in Plautus, than for tragic or epic poetry; and I fancy an author who should introduce such a sport of words upon the stage, even in the comedy of our days, would meet with small applause.

His neck obliquely o'er his shoulders hung,
 Prest with the weight of sleep that tames the strong!
 There belcht the mingled streams of wine and blood,
 And human flesh, his indigested food.
 Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire 445
 With animating breath the seeds of fire;
 Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,
 And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.
 The stake now glow'd beneath the burning bed
 (Green as it was) and sparkled fi'ry red. 450
 Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring;
 With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.
 Urg'd by some present god, they swift let fall
 The pointed torment on his visual ball.
 Myself above them from a rising ground 455
 Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.
 As when a shipwright stands his workmen o'er,
 Who ply the wimble, some huge beam to bore;
 Urg'd on all hands it nimbly spins about,
 The grain deep-piercing till it scoops it out: 460
 In his broad eye so whirls the fi'ry wood;
 From the pierc'd pupil spouts the boiling blood;

v. 458. ——— *who ply the wimble.*] This and the following comparison are drawn from low life, but ennobled with a dignity of expression. Instead of *ἑλόντες*, Aristarchus reads *ἐχόντες*, as Eustathius informs us. The similitudes are natural and lively, we are made spectators of what they represent. Sophocles has imitated this, in the tragedy where OEdipus tears out his own eyes; and Euripides has transferred this whole adventure into his Cyclops with very little alteration, and in particular the former comparison. But to instance in all that Euripides has imitated, would be to transcribe a great part of that tragedy. In short, this episode in general is very noble; but if the interlude about *Οὔτις* be at all allowable in so grave and majestic a poem, it is only allowable because it is here related before a light and injudicious assembly; I mean the Phæacians, to whom any thing more great or serious would have been less pleasing; so that the poet writes to his audience. I wonder this has never been offered in defence of this low entertainment.

Sindg'd are his brows ; the scorching lids grow black ;
The jelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.

And as when arm'ers temper in the ford 465

The keen-edg'd pole-ax, or the shining sword,

The red-hot metal hisses in the lake,

Thus in his eye-ball his'd the plunging stake.

He sends a dreadful groan : the rocks around

Thro' all their inmost winding caves resound. 470

Scar'd we receded. Forth, with frantic hand

He tore, and dash'd on earth the goary brand :

Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,

With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.

From all their dens the one-ey'd race repair, 475

From rifted rocks, and mountains bleak in air.

All haste assembled, at his well-known roar,

Enquire the cause, and croud the cavern door.

What hurts thee, Polypheme ? what strange affright

Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night ? 480

Does any mortal in th' unguarded hour

Of sleep, oppresses thee, or by fraud or pow'r ?

Or thieves insidious the fair flock surprise ?

Thus they : the Cyclop from his den replies,

Friends, 'Noman kills me ; 'Noman in the hour 485

Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent pow'r.

" If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine

" Inflict disease, it fits thee to resign :

" To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray,"

The brethren cry'd, and instant strode away. 490

Joy touch'd my secret soul, and conscious heart,

Pleas'd with th' effect of conduct and of art.

Meantime the Cyclop, raging with his wound,

Spreads his wide arms, and searches round and round :

At last, the stone removing from the gate, 495

With hands extended in the midst he sat :

v. 495. — *the stone removing from the gate.*] This conduct of Polypheme may seem very absurd, and it looks to be improbable

And search'd each passing sheep, and felt it o'er,
 Secure to seize us ere we reach'd the door.
 (Such as his shallow wit, he deem'd was mine)
 But secret I revolv'd the deep design; 500
 'Twas for our lives my lab'ring bosom wrought;
 Each scheme I turn'd, and sharpen'd ev'ry thought;
 This way and that, I cast to save my friends,
 'Till one resolve my varying counsel ends.

Strong were the rams, with native purple fair, 505
 Well fed, and largest of the fleecy care.
 These three and three, with osier bands we ty'd
 (The twining bands the Cyclop's bed supply'd)
 The midmost bore a man; the outward two
 Secur'd each side: so bound we all the crew. 510
 One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock;
 In his deep fleece my grasping hands I lock,

that he should not call the other giants to assist him, in the detection of the persons who had taken his sight from him; especially when it was now day-light, and they at hand. Eustathius was aware of the objection, and imputes it to his folly and dullness. Tully, 5 Tuscul. gives the same character of Polypheme; and because it vindicates Homer for introducing a speech of Polypheme to his ram; I will beg leave to transcribe it. "Tiresiam, quem sapientem fingunt poetæ, nunquam inducunt deplorantem Cæcitatem suam; at verò Polyphemum Homerus, cum immanem ferumque finxisset, cum ariete etiam colloquentem facit, ejusque laudare fortunas, quod quæ vellet, ingredi posset, & quæ vellet attingere: recte hic equidem; nihilo enim erat ipse Cyclops quam aries ille prudentior." This is a full defence of Homer; but Tully has mistaken the words of Polypheme to the ram, for there is no resemblance to "ejus laudare fortunas, quod quæ vellet ingredi posset, &c." I suppose Tully quoted by memory.

v. 511. *One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock.*] This passage has been misunderstood, to imply that Ulysses took more care of himself than of his companions, in chusing the largest ram for his own convenience; an imputation unworthy of the character of a hero. But there is no ground for it, he takes more care of his friends than of his own person, for he allots them three sheep, and lets them escape before him. Besides, this conduct was necessary; for all his friends were bound, and, by chusing this ram, he keeps himself at liberty to unbind the rest after their escape.

And fast beneath, in woolly curls inwove,
 There cling implicit, and confide in Jove.
 When rosy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales, 515
 He drove to pasture all the lusty males :
 The ewes still folded, with distended thighs
 Unmilk'd, lay bleating in distressful cries.
 But heedless of those cares, with anguish stung,
 He felt their fleeces as they pass'd along. 520
 (Fool that he was) and let them safely go,
 All unsuspecting of their freight below.

The master ram at last approach'd the gate,
 Charg'd with his wool, and with Ulysses' fate.
 Him while he past the monster blind bespoke : 525
 What makes my ram the lag of all the flock ?
 First thou wert wont to crop the flow'ry mead,
 First to the field and river's bank to lead,

Neither was there any other method practicable; for, being the last, there was no person to bind him. Eustathius.

The care Ulysses takes of his companions agrees with the character of Horace.

“ Dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
 “ Pertulit”————

But it may seem improbable that a ram should be able to carry so great a burden as Ulysses; the generation of sheep, as well as men, may appear to have decreased since the days of Ulysses. Homer himself seems to have guarded against this objection, he describes these sheep as εὐτρεφέες, καλοὶ, μεγάλοι; the ram is spoken of as μακρὰ βίβας (an expression applied to Ajax, as Eustathius observes, in the Iliad.) History informs us of sheep of a very large size in other countries, and a poet is at liberty to chuse the largest, if by that method he gives his story a greater appearance of probability.

v. 517. *The ewes still folded* ———
Unmilk'd, lay bleating ———]

This particularity may seem of no importance, and consequently unnecessary: but it is in poetry as in painting; they both with very good effect use circumstances that are not absolutely necessary to the subject, but only appendages and embellishments. This particular has that effect, it represents nature, and therefore gives an air of truth and probability to the story. Dacier.

And first with stately step at ev'ning hour
Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bow'r. 530
Now far the last, with pensive pace and slow
Thou mov'st, as conscious of thy master's woe!
Seest thou these lids that now unfold in vain?
(The deed of Noman and his wicked train)
Oh! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord, 535
And wou'd but fate the pow'r of speech afford;
Soon might'st thou tell me, where in secret here
The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear:
Swung round and round, and dash'd from rock to rock,
His batter'd brains shou'd on the pavement smoke. 540
No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives,
While such a monster as vile Noman lives.

The giant spoke, and thro' the hollow rock
Dismiss'd the ram, the father of the flock.
No sooner freed, and thro' th' inclosure past, 545
First I release myself, my fellows last:
Fat sheep and goats in throngs we drive before,
And reach our vessel on the winding shore.
With joy the sailors view their friends return'd,
And hail us living whom as dead they mourn'd. 550
Big tears of transport stand in ev'ry eye,
I check their fondness, and command to fly.
Aboard in haste they heave the wealthy sheep,
And snatch their oars, and rush into the deep.

Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear, 555
As far as human voice cou'd reach the ear;
With taunts the distant giant I accost,
Hear me, oh Cyclop! hear ungracious host!
'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,
Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave; 560
But one, the vengeance fated from above
Doom'd to inflict; the instrument of Jove.
Thy barb'rous breach of hospitable bands,
The god, the god revenges by my hands.

These words the Cyclop's burning rage provoke:
 From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock; 566
 High o'er the billows flew the massy load,
 And near the ship came thund'ring on the flood.
 It almost brush'd the helm, and fell before:
 The whole sea shook, and reflux beat the shore. 570

v. 569. *It almost brush'd the helm, &c.*] The ancients, remarks Eustathius, placed an obelisk and asterism before this verse; the former, to note that they thought it misplaced; the latter, to shew that they looked upon it as a beauty. Apparently it is not agreeable to the description; for how is it possible that this huge rock falling before the vessel should endanger the rudder, which is in the stern? Can a ship sail with the stern foremost? Some ancient critics, to take away the contradiction, have asserted that Ulysses turned his ship to speak to Polypheme; but this is absurd, for why could not Ulysses speak from the stern as well as from the prow; it therefore seems that the verse ought to be entirely omitted, as undoubtedly it may without any chasm in the author. We find it inserted a little lower, and there it corresponds with the description, and stands with propriety.

But if we suppose that the ship of Ulysses lay at such a distance from the cave of Polypheme, as to make it necessary to bring it nearer, to be heard distinctly; then indeed we may solve the difficulty, and let the verse stand: for if we suppose Ulysses approaching towards Polypheme, then the rock may be said to be thrown before the vessel, that is, beyond it, and endanger the rudder, and this bears some appearance of probability.

This passage brings to my memory a description of Polypheme in Apollonius, Argonaut. i.

Κεῖν' ἀνὴρ καὶ πόντις ἐπὶ γλαυκῷ θέσκεν
 Ὀϊδματός, ὑδὲ θοῶς βάπτεν πόδας ἀλλ' ὅσον ἄκροις
 Ἴχθυσι τεύγόμενος διερῇ πεφόρητο κελυθῷ.

If Polypheme had really this quality of running upon the waves, he might have destroyed Ulysses without throwing this mountain; but Apollonius is undoubtedly guilty of an absurdity, and one might rather believe that he would sink the earth at every step, than run upon the waters with such lightness as not to wet his feet. Virgil has more judiciously applied those lines to Camilla in his *Æneis*.

" — Mare per medium fluctu suspensa tumentis

" Ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret æquore plantas."

The poet expresses the swiftness of Camilla in the nimble flow of the verse, which consists almost entirely of dactyles, and runs off with the utmost rapidity, like the last of those quoted from Apollonius,

The strong concussion on the heaving tide
 Roll'd back the vessel to th' island's side :
 Again I shov'd her off ; our fate to fly,
 Each nerve we stretch, and ev'ry oar we ply.
 Just 'scap'd impending death, when now again 575
 We twice as far had furrow'd back the main,
 Once more I raise my voice ; my friends afraid
 With mild entreaties my design dissuade.
 What boots the god-less giant to provoke ?
 Whose arm may sink us at a single stroke. 580
 Already, when the dreadful rock he threw,
 Old ocean shook, and back his surges flew.
 The sounding voice directs his aim again ;
 The rock o'erwhelms us, and we 'scap'd in vain.
 But I, of mind elate, and scorning fear, 585
 Thus with new taunts insult the monster's ear.
 Cyclop ! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
 Ask who disfigur'd thus that eye-less face ?
 Say 'twas Ulysses ; 'twas his deed, declare,
 Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair ; 590
 Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
 Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground.
 Th' astonish'd savage with a roar replies :
 Oh heav'ns ! oh faith of ancient prophecies !
 This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold, 595
 (The mighty seer who on these hills grew old ;

v. 595. *This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold.*] This incident sufficiently shews the use of that dissimulation which enters into the character of Ulysses : if he had discovered his name, the Cyclop had destroyed him as his most dangerous enemy. Plutarch in his discourse upon Garrulity, commends the fidelity of the companions of Ulysses, who when they were dragged by this giant and dashed against the rock, confessed not a word concerning their lord, and scorned to purchase their lives at the expence of their honesty. Ulysses himself, adds he, was the most eloquent and most silent of men ; he knew that a word spoken never wrought so much good, as a word concealed ; men teach us to speak, but the gods teach us silence ; for silence is the first thing that is taught us at our

Skill'd the dark fate of mortals to declare,
 And learn'd in all wing'd omens of the air)
 Long since he menac'd, such was fate's command;
 And nam'd Ulysses as the destin'd hand. 600
 I deem'd some god-like giant to behold,
 Or lofty hero, haughty, brave, and bold;
 Not this weak pigmy-wretch, of mean design,
 Who not by strength subdu'd me, but by wine.
 But come, accept our gifts, and join to pray 605
 Great Neptune's blessing on the wat'ry way:
 For his I am, and I the lineage own:
 Th' immortal father no less boasts the son.
 His pow'r can heal me, and re-light my eye;
 And only his, of all the gods on high. 610
 Oh! could this arm (I thus aloud rejoin'd)
 From that vast bulk dislodge thy bloody mind,
 And send thee howling to the realms of night!
 As sure, as Neptune cannot give thee fight.

initiation into sacred mysteries; and we find these companions had profited under so great a master in silence as Ulysses.

Ovid relates this prophecy in the story of Polypheme and Galatea.

- " Telemus interea Siculum delatus in æquor,
- " Telemus Eurymedes, quem nulla fefellerat ales,
- " Terribilem Polyphemon adit; lumenque quod unum.
- " Fronte geris mediâ, rapiet tibi, dixit, Ulysses:
- " Risit, et, O vatum stolidissime, falleris, inquit
- " Altera jam rapuit:—"————

[v. 603. *Not this weak pigmy-wretch* —————] This is spoken in compliance with the character of a giant; the Phæacians wondered at the manly stature of Ulysses; Polypheme speaks of him as a dwarf; his rage undoubtedly made him treat him with so much contempt. Nothing in nature can be better imagined than this story of the Cyclops, if we consider the assembly before which it was spoken; I mean the Phæacians, who had been driven from their habitation by the Cyclopeans, as appears from the sixth of the *Odyssey*, and compelled to make a new settlement in their present country: Ulysses gratifies them by shewing what revenge he took upon one of their ancient enemies, and they could not decently refuse assistance to a person, who had punished those who had insulted their fore-fathers.

Thus I: while raging he repeats his cries, 615
With hands uplifted to the starry skies.

Hear me, oh Neptune! thou whose arms are hurl'd
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world.

If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,
And if th' unhappy Cyclop be thy son; 620
Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,
Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair.

If to review his country be his fate,
Be it thro' toils and suff'rings, long and late,
His lost companions let him first deplore; 625
Some vessel, not his own, transport him o'er;
And when at home from foreign suff'rings freed,
More near and deep, domestic woes succeed!

With imprecations thus he fill'd the air,
And angry Neptune heard th' unrighteous pray'r. 630
A larger rock then heaving from the plain,
He whirl'd it round: it sung across the main:
It fell, and brush'd the stern: the billows roar,
Shake at the weight, and refluent beat the shore.

With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635
And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.
Our fight the whole collected navy cheer'd,
Who, waiting long, by turns had hop'd and fear'd.
There disembarking on the green sea-side,
We land our cattle, and the spoil divide: 640

v. 617. *The prayer of the Cyclops.*] This is a master-piece of art in Ulysses; he shews Neptune to be his enemy, which might deter the Phæacians from assisting in his transportation, yet brings this very circumstance as an argument to induce them to it. "O Neptune, says the Cyclops, destroy Ulysses, or if he be fated to return, may it be in a vessel not of his own!" Here he plainly tells the Phæacians that the prayer of Cyclops was almost accomplished, for his own ships were destroyed by Neptune, and now he was ready to sail in a foreign vessel; by which the whole prayer would be compleated. By this he persuades them, that they were the people ordained by the fates to land him in his own country.

Of these due shares to ev'ry sailor fall;
 The master ram was voted mine by all:
 And him (the guardian of Ulysses' fate)
 With pious mind to heav'n I consecrate.
 But the great god, whose thunder rends the skies, 645
 Averse, beholds the smoking sacrifice;
 And sees me wand'ring still from coast to coast;
 And all my vessels, all my people, lost!

While thoughtless we indulge the genial rite,
 As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite;
 'Till ev'ning Phœbus roll'd away the light:
 Stretch'd on the shore in careless ease we rest,
 'Till ruddy morning purpled o'er the east.

650 }

v. 642. *The master ram was voted mine* —] This perhaps might be a present of honour and distinction: but I should rather take it with Eustathius to be the ram which brought Ulysses out of the den of Polypheme. That hero immediately offers it in sacrifice to Jupiter, in gratitude for his deliverance; an instance of piety to be imitated in more enlightened ages.

The book concludes with a testimony of this hero's humanity; in the midst of the joy for his own safety, his generous heart finds room for a tender sentiment for the loss of his companions; both his joys and his sorrows are commendable and virtuous.

Virgil has borrowed this episode of Polyphemus, and inserted it into the third of the *Æneis*. I will not presume to decide which author has the greatest success, they both have their peculiar excellencies. Rapin confesses this episode to be equal to any parts of the *Iliad*, that it is an original, and that Homer introduced that monstrous character to shew the marvellous, and paint it in a new set of colours. Demetrius Phalereus calls it a piece of sublime strangely horrible; and Longinus, even while he is condemning the *Odyssey*, allows this adventure of Polypheme to be very great and beautiful; (for so Monsieur Boileau understands Longinus, though Monsieur Dacier differs from his judgment.) In Homer we find a greater variety of natural incidents than in Virgil, but in Virgil a greater pomp of verse. Homer is not uniform in his description, but sometimes stoops perhaps below the dignity of epic poetry; Virgil walks along with an even, grave, and majestic pace: they both raise our admiration, mixed with delight and terror.

Then from their anchors all our ships unbind,
And mount the decks, and call the willing wind. 655
Now rang'd in order on our banks, we sweep
With hasty strokes the hoarse resounding deep;
Blind to the future, pensive with our fears,
Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK X.

THE ARGUMENT.

Adventures with Æolus, the Lestrigons, and Circe.

Ulysses arrives at the island of Æolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and incloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected. Then they sail to the Lestrigons, where they lose eleven ships, and with one only remaining, proceed to the island of Circe. Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all which, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine. Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb Moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men. After a year's stay with her, he prepares at her instigation for his voyage to the infernal shades.

AT length we reach'd Æolia's sea-girt shore,
Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore,
A floating isle! high-raised by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.

* Poetry is a mixture of history and fable; the foundation is historical, because the poet does not entirely neglect truth; the rest is fabulous, because naked truth would not be sufficiently surprising; for the marvellous ought to take place, especially in epic poetry. But it may be asked, does not Homer offend against all degrees of probability in these episodes of the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, Cyclops and Antiphates? How are these incredible stories to be reduced into the bounds of probability? It is true, the marvellous ought to be used in epic poetry; but ought it to

Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred, 5
And six fair daughters, grac'd the royal bed :

transgress all power of belief? Aristotle in his *Art of Poetry* lays down a rule to justify these incidents: "A poet, says that author, ought to prefer things impossible, provided they are probable, before things possible, that are nevertheless incredible." Chap. xv. This rule is not without obscurity; but Monsieur Dacier has explained it in his annotations upon that author: a thing may be impossible, and yet probable: thus when the poet introduces a deity, any incident humanly impossible receives a full probability by being ascribed to the skill and power of a god: it is thus we justify the story of the transformation of the ship of the Phæacians into a rock, and the fleet of Æneas into sea-nymphs. But such relations ought not to be too frequent in a poem; for it is an established rule, that all incidents which require a divine probability only, should be so disengaged from the action, that they may be subtracted from it without destroying it; for instance, if we omit the transformation of the ship, the action of the *Odyssey* will retain the same perfection. And therefore those episodes which are necessary, and make essential parts of the poem, ought to be grounded upon human probability; now the episodes of Circe, Polypheme, the Sirens, &c. are necessary to the action of the *Odyssey*: but will any man say they are within the bounds of human probability? How then shall we solve this difficulty? Homer artificially has brought them within the degrees of it; he makes Ulysses relate them before a credulous and ignorant assembly; he lets us into the character of the Phæacians, by saying they were a very dull nation, in the sixth book,

Where never science rear'd her laurel'd head.

It is thus the poet gives probability to his fables, by reciting them to a people who believed them, and who through a laziness of life were fond of romantic stories; he adapts himself to his audience, and yet even here he is not unmindful of his more intelligent readers: he gives them (observes Bossu) in these fables all the pleasure that can be reaped from physical or moral truths, disguised under miraculous allegories, and by this method reconciles them to poetical probability.

There are several heads to which probability may be reduced; either to divinity, and then nothing is improbable, for every thing is possible to a deity; or to our ideas of things whether true or false: thus in the descent of Ulysses into hell, there is not one word of probability or historic truth; but if we examine it by the ideas that the old world entertained of hell, it becomes probable; or lastly, we may have respect to vulgar opinion or fame; for a poet is at liberty to relate a falsehood, provided it be commonly believed to be true. We might have recourse to this last rule, which is likewise laid down by Aristotle, to vindicate the *Odyssey*, if

These sons their sisters wed, and all remain,
Their parents pride, and pleasure of their reign.

there were occasion for it; for in all ages such fables have found belief.

I will only add, that Virgil has given a sanction to these stories, by inserting them in his *Æneis*; and Horace calls them by the remarkable epithet of specious miracles.

“ — Ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat,

“ Antiphaten, Scyllamque & cum Cyclope Charybdin.”

Longinus calls these fables dreams, but adds, that they are the dreams of Jupiter; he likewise blames those episodes, because in all of them there is much more fable and narration than action: which criticism may perhaps be too severe, if we consider that past adventures are here brought into present use, and though they be not actions, yet they are the representations of actions, agreeable to the nature of episodes.

It may be questioned if Virgil is so happy in the choice of the audience to which he relates many of these fables; the Carthaginians were not ignorant like the Phæacians: from whence then do his stories receive their probability? It is not so easy to answer this objection, unless we have recourse to common fame: Virgil was not the author of them, Homer had established them, and brought them into fame, so that Virgil had common opinion to vindicate him, joined with Homer's authority.

v. 1. *We reach'd Æolia's shore.*] It is difficult to distinguish what is truth from what is fiction in this relation: Diodorus, who was a Sicilian, speaks of Æolus, and refers to this passage: “ This is that Æolus, says he, who entertained Ulysses in his voyages: he is reported to have been a pious and just prince, “ and given to hospitality, and therefore φίλος ἀθανάτοις, as Homer expresses it.” But whence has the fable of his being the governour of the winds taken its foundation? Eustathius tells us, that he was a very wise man, and one who from long observation could foretel what weather was like to follow: others say he was an astronomer, and studied chiefly the nature of the winds; and as Atlas from his knowledge in astrology was said to sustain the heavens; so Æolus, from his experience and observation, was fabled to be the ruler or disposer of the winds. But what explication can be given of this bag, in which he is said to bind the winds? Eratosthenes, continues Eustathius, said pleasantly, that we shall then find the places where Ulysses voyaged, when we have discovered the artist, or cobbler, τὸν *Καυρία*, who sewed up this bag of the winds. But the reason of the fiction is supposed to be this: Æolus taught the use and management of sails, and having foretold Ulysses from what quarter the winds would blow, he may be said to have gathered them into a kind of inclosure, and retained them as use should require. Diodorus explains it a

All day they feast, all day the bowls flow round,
And joy and music thro' the isle resound :

10

little differently, lib. v. *Πρὸς δὲ τοῖς τὴν τῶν ἰσίων χρεῖαν τοῖς ναυτικοῖς ἐπεισηγήσασθαι, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τῷ πυρὸς προσημασίας παρατηρηκότες, προλέγειν τὰς ἐχώρας ἀνέμους εὐτόχως, ἐξ ἧς ταμίαν ἀνέμων μῦθος ἀνέδειξε*: that is, "He taught the use of sails, and "having learned from observing the bearing of the smoke and fires " (of those Vulcanian islands) what winds would blow, he usually "foretold them with exactness; and from hence he is fabled to "be the disposer of the winds." The words of Varro, quoted by Servius, are to the same purpose: "Varro autem dicit hunc "insularum regem fuisse, ex quarum nebulis & fumo Vulcaniæ "insulæ prædicens futura flabra ventorum, ab imperitis visus est "ventos suâ potestate retinere."

Polybius will not admit that this story of Æolus is entirely fable; and Strabo is of the same opinion, that Ulysses was in the Sicilian seas; and that there was such a king as Æolus, he affirms to be truth; but that he met with such adventures is, in the main, fiction. There may another reason, as Eustathius observes, be given for the fiction of binding up the winds in a bag: that who practised the art of incantation or charms, made use of the skin of a dolphin, and pretended by certain ceremonies to bind or loose the winds as they pleased; and this practice is a sufficient ground to build upon in poetry.

The solution also of Bochart is worth our notice: Homer borrowed the word *Αἰολος* from the Phœnician Aol, which signifies a whirlwind or tempest, from whence the Greeks formed their word *αἰελλὰ*; the Phœnicians observing the king of this island to be very expert in foretelling the winds, called him king Aolin, or king of the winds and storms; from hence Homer formed a proper name, and called him *Αἰολος*. It must be confessed, that this solution is ingenious, and not without an appearance of probability.

But having laid together what may be said in vindication of this story of Æolus: justice requires that I should not suppress what has been objected against it by no less a critic than Longinus: he observes that a genius naturally lofty sometimes falls into trifling; an instance of this, adds he, is what Homer says of the bag wherein Æolus inclosed the winds. Cap. vii. *περὶ ὑψῆς*.

v. 3. *A floating isle* ———] The word in the original is *πλωτή*: some take it, as Eustathius remarks, for a proper name; but Aristarchus believes Homer intended to express it by a floating island, that was frequently removed by concussions and earthquakes, for it is seen sometimes on the right, at other times on the left hand: the like has been said of Delos; and Herodotus thus describes the island Echemis in the Ægyptian seas. Dionysius, in his *περιήγησις*, affirms, that this island is not called by the name of *πλωτή*, by reason of its floating, but because it is an island of

At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,
And crown'd with love the pleasures of the day.

fame, and much sailed unto, or *πλωτὴ* by navigators; that is, *πλεομένη*, or *ἐν τόποις πλεομένοισι κειμένη*, or lying in seas of great navigation: but perhaps the former opinion of Aristarchus may be preferable, as it best contributes to raise the wonder and admiration of the credulous ignorant Phæacians, which was the sole intention of Ulysses.

These islands were seven in number (but eleven at this day) Strongyle, Hiera, Didyme, Hicesia, Lipara, Erycodes, and Phænicodes, all lying in the Sicilian seas, as Diodorus Siculus testifies; but differs in the name of one of the islands.

Strabo is of opinion, that the island called by Homer the *Æolian*, is Strongyle; "*Ἡ δὲ Στρογγύλη, ἐστὶ διαπυρρὸς, τῷ φέγγει πλεονεκτῶσα, ἐν ἧ αὖθα δὲ τὸν Αἰόλον οἰκῆσαι φασί.*" "This island Strongyle abounds with subterraneous fires, &c. and here *Æolus* is said to have reigned." Pliny agrees with Strabo, lib. iii. but Dacier understands it to be Lipara, according to Virgil, *Æn.* lib. viii. but in reality the seven were all called the *Æolian* islands.

"*Insula Sicaniū juxta latus, Æoliamque*

"*Erigitur Liparen, fumantibus ardua faxis.*"

But why is it fabled to be surrounded with a wall of brass? Eustathius says, that this may proceed from its being almost inaccessible; but this reason is not sufficient to give foundation to such a fiction. Dacier observes that it is thus described, because of the subterranean fires, which from time to time break out from the entrails of this island. Aristotle speaking of Lipara, which is the most considerable of the *Æolian* islands, thus describes it; "all night long the island Lipara appears enlightened with fires." The same relation agrees with Strongyle, called Strombolo at this day.

I will take the liberty to propose a conjecture, which may perhaps not unhappily give a reason of this fiction of the wall of brass, from this description of Aristotle: all night fires appear (says that author) from this island, and these fires falling upon the seas, might cast a ruddy reflection round the island, which to navigators might look like a wall of brass inclosing it. This is but a conjecture drawn from appearances; but to write according to appearances is allowable in poetry, where a seeming or a real truth may be used indifferently.

v. 5. *Six blooming youths — and six fair daughters.*] Diodorus Siculus mentions the names of the six sons of *Æolus*, but is silent concerning his daughters, and therefore others, who can find mysteries in the plainest description, assure us, that this is not to be understood historically, but allegorically: *Æolus* represents the year, his twelve children are the twelve months, six of which are

This port affords our wand'ring fleet
A month's reception, and a safe retreat.

female, to denote those six months in which the earth brings forth her fruits; by his six sons the other months are understood, in which the seed is sown, or in which the herbs, fruits, &c. are nourished in order to production; these may therefore be called males. But this is to darken an author into mystery, not to explain him. Dacier gives us another allegorical interpretation: the poet makes him the governour of the winds, and gives him twelve children, these denote the twelve principal winds; half of which children are males, half females; the males denote the winter winds, which as it were brood upon the earth, and generate its increase; the females those warmer seasons of the year, when the more prolific winds blow, and make the earth teem with fruitfulness: these children of Æolus are in continual feasts in his palace; that is, the winds are continually fed by the exhalations from the earth, which may be called their food or nourishment: the brothers and sisters intermarry; this denotes the nature of the winds, which blow promiscuously, and one wind unites itself with another from all quarters of the world indifferently: the brothers and sisters are said to sleep by night together; that is, the winds are usually still and calm, and as it were rest together, at that season. But what occasion is there to have recourse to an uncertain allegory, when such great names as Polybius, Strabo, and Diodorus assure us, that this relation is in part true history; and if there was really such a king as Æolus, why might he not be a father of six sons and as many daughters? I should prefer a plain history to a dark allegory.

v. 9. *All day they feast ———
—— and music thro' the isle resounds.]*

Homer was not unacquainted with the wonders related of this island of Lipara. "In this island, says Aristotle, a monument is reported to be, of which they tell miracles: they assure us that they hear issuing from it the sound of timbrels or cymbals, plainly and distinctly." It is easy to perceive that this is founded upon the noise the fires make which are inclosed in the caverns in this island, and that Homer alludes to the ancient name of it, which in the Phæacian language (Meloginin, as Bochart observes) signifies the land of those who play upon instruments. We learn from Callimachus, in his hymn to Diana, that Lipara was originally called Meligounis. "She (Diana) went to find out the Cyclops: she found them in Lipara, for that is the name the isle now bears, but anciently it was called Meligounis; they were labouring a huge mass of red-hot iron, &c." So that Homer is not all invention, but adapts his poetry to tradition and ancient story. Dacier.

Full oft' the monarch urg'd me to relate 15
 The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate;
 Full oft' I told: at length for parting mov'd;
 The king with mighty gifts my suit approv'd.
 The adverse winds in leathern bags he brac'd,
 Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling blast:
 For him the mighty fire of gods assign'd 21
 The tempest's lord, the tyrant of the wind;
 His word alone the list'ning storms obey,
 To smoothe the deep, or swell the foamy sea.
 These in my hollow ship the monarch hung, 25
 Securely fetter'd by a silver thong;
 But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales
 He charg'd to fill, and guide the swelling sails: }
 Rare gift! but oh, what gift to fools avails! }

Nine prosp'rous days we ply'd the lab'ring oar; 30
 The tenth presents our welcome native shore:
 The hills display the beacon's friendly light,
 And rising mountains gain upon our sight.

v. 32. *The bill's display the beacon's friendly light.*] Eustathius observes, that these fires were a kind of beacons kept continually burning to direct navigators; the smoke gave notice by day, the light of the flame by night. Ithaca was invironed with rocks, and consequently there was a necessity for this care, to guide sea-faring men to avoid those rocks, and to point out the places of landing with security.

But is it not an imputation to the wisdom of Ulysses, to suffer himself to be surpris'd with sleep when he was almost ready to enter the ports of his own country? And is it not probable that the joy he must be supposed to receive at the sight of it, should induce him to a few hours watchfulness? It is easier to defend his sleeping here, than in the thirteenth of the *Odyssey*: the poet very judiciously tells us, that Ulysses for nine days together almost continually waked and took charge of the vessel, and the word *κατακλινόμενος* shews that nature was wearied out, and that he fell into an involuntary repose; it can therefore be no diminution to his character to be forced to yield to the calls of nature, any more than it is to be hungry: his prudence and love of his country sufficiently appear from the care he took through the space of nine days to arrive at it; so that this circumstance must be imputed to the infirmity of human nature, and not to a defect of care or wisdom in Ulysses.

Then first my eyes, by watchful toils oppress'd,
 Comply'd to take the balmy gifts of rest; 35
 Then first my hands did from the rudder part,
 (So much the love of home possess'd my heart)
 When lo! on board a fond debate arose;
 What rare device those vessels might inclose?
 What sum, what prize from Æolus I brought? 40
 Whilst to his neighbour each express'd his thought.
 Say, whence, ye gods, contending nations strive
 Who most shall please, who most our hero give?
 Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils;
 Whilst we, the wretched part'ners of his toils, 45
 Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,
 And only rich in barren fame return.
 Now Æolus, ye see, augments his store:
 But come my friends, these mystic gifts explore.
 They said: and (oh curs'd fate!) the thongs unbound!
 The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round; 51
 Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,
 The ocean widen'd, and the shores withdrew.

v. 50. *They said: and (oh curs'd fate!) the thongs unbound.*] This relation has been blamed as improbable; what occasion was there to unbind the bag, when these companions of Ulysses might have satisfied their curiosity that there was no treasure in it, from the lightness of it? But Homer himself obviates this objection, by telling us that Æolus fastened it in the vessel, as Eustathius observes,

Ναὶ δ' ἐνὶ γλυφύῃ κατέδεε —————

Bossu gives the moral of this fable or allegory, cap. x. lib. i. By the winds inclosed in the bag, into which the companions of Ulysses were so unwise as to pry, is to be understood, that we ought not to intrude into those mysteries of government which the prince intends to keep secret: the tempests and confusions raised by the loosing the winds, represent the mischiefs and disorders that arise from such a vain curiosity in the subject: a wise people permit the winds to rest without molestation, and satisfy themselves with those that the prince is pleased to release, and believe them to be the most proper and useful. But whatever judgment is passed upon this explication, it is certainly an instance of the ill consequences of avarice, and unseasonable curiosity.

Rous'd from my fatal sleep, I long debate
If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate:
Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,
'Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

55

Meanwhile our vessels plough the liquid plain,
And soon the known Æolian coast regain,
Our groans the rocks remurmur'd to the main. } 60

We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast
Our thirst and hunger hastily repress'd;
That done, two chosen heralds strait attend
Our second progress to my royal friend:
And him amidst his jovial sons we found; } 65

The banquet streaming, and the goblets crown'd:
There humbly stopp'd with conscious shame and awe,
Nor nearer than the gate presum'd to draw.

But soon his sons their well-known guest descry'd,
And starting from their couches loudly cry'd, } 70

Ulysses here! what dæmon cou'dst thou meet
To thwart thy passage, and repel thy fleet?
Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care
For Greece, for home, and all thy soul held dear?

Thus they: in silence long my fate I mourn'd, } 75
At length these words with accent low return'd.

Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft
Of all the blessings of your god-like gift!

But grant, oh grant our loss we may retrieve:
A favour you, and you alone can give. } 80

v. 55. *If still to live, or desp'rate plunge to fate.*] We ought not to infer from this passage, that Homer thought a person might lawfully take away his own life to avoid the greatest dangers; what Ulysses here speaks arises from the violence of a sudden passion, and gives us a true picture of human nature: the wisest of men are not free from the infirmity of passion, but reason corrects and subdues it. This is the case in the instance before us; Ulysses has so much of the man in him as to be liable to the passion of man; but so much virtue and wisdom as to restrain and govern it.

Thus I with art to move their pity try'd,
 And touch'd the youths; but their stern fire reply'd,
 Vile wretch, be gone! this instant I command
 Thy fleet accurs'd to leave our hallow'd land.
 His baneful suit pollutes these blest'd abodes, 85
 Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.

Thus fierce he said: we fighting went our way,
 And with desponding hearts put off to sea.
 The sailors spent with toils their folly mourn,
 But mourn in vain; no prospect of return. 90
 Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,
 The next proud Lamos' stately tow'rs appear, }
 And Læstrigonia's gates arise distinct in air.
 The shepherd quitting here at night the plain,
 Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain; 95

v. 83. *Vile wretch, be gone!* ———] This inhospitable character of Æolus may seem contrary to the humane disposition which Homer before ascribed to him; he therefore tells us, that Ulysses appeared to him to be an object of divine vengeance, and that to give him assistance would be to act against the will of the gods. But, observes Eustathius, is not this an ill chosen relation to be made to the Phæacians, as the critics have remarked, and might it not deter them from assisting a man whom Æolus had rejected as an enemy to the gods? He answers, that it was evident to the Phæacians that Ulysses was no longer under the displeasure of heaven, that the imprecations of Polypheme were fulfilled; he being to be transported to his own country by strangers, according to his prayer in the ninth of the Odyssey, and consequently the Phæacians have nothing to fear from the assistance which they lend Ulysses.

v. 94. *The shepherd quitting here at night the plain, &c.*] This passage has been thought to be very difficult; but Eustathius makes it intelligible: the land of the Læstrigons was fruitful, and fit for pasturage: it was the practice to tend the sheep by day, and the oxen by night; for it was infested by a kind of fly that was very grievous to the oxen by day, whereas the wool of the sheep defended them from it: and therefore the shepherds drove their oxen to pasture by night. If the same shepherd who watched the sheep by day, could pass the night without sleep, and attend the oxen, he performed a double duty, and consequently merited a double reward. Homer says, that the ways of the night and day were near to each other, that is, the pastures of the sheep and oxen, and the ways that led to them, were adjacent; for the

But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,
And adds the herdsman's to the shepherd's care,

shepherd that drove his flocks home (or εἰσελάων, as Homer expresses it) could call to the herdsman, who drove his herds to pasture, or ἐξελάων, and be heard with ease, and therefore the roads must be adjoining.

Crates gives us a very different interpretation: he asserts that Homer intended to express the situation of the Læstrigons, and affirms that they lay under the head of the dragon, κεφαλὴν δράκοντος (which Dacier renders the tail of the dragon) according to Aratus,

——— ἤχιπερ (κεφαλῇ) ἄκραι
Μίσγονται δύσεις, ἢ ἀνατολαὶ ἀλλήλησιν.

which Tully thus translates,

“ Hoc caput hic paullum sese subitoque recondit
“ Ortus ubi atque obitus partem admiscuntur in unam.”

If this be true, the poet intended to express that there was scarce any night at all among the Læstrigons, according to that of Manilius,

“ Vixque ortus, occasus erit” ———

But how will this agree with the situation of the Læstrigons, who were undoubtedly Sicilians, according to the direct affirmation of Thucydides, lib. vi. of his history? Besides, if Læstrigonia lay under the head of the dragon, Ulysses must have spent seven months instead of seven days, in sailing from the Æolian islands to that country. Neither is there any necessity to have recourse to this solution; for what signifies the length or shortness of the day to the double wages of the shepherds, when it was paid to him who took upon him a double charge of watching the whole day and night, which comprehends the space of four and twenty hours; which alone, whether the greater part of it was by night or day, entitled the shepherd to a double reward? I therefore should rather chuse the former interpretation, with which Didymus agrees. Νυκτεριναὶ, καὶ ἡμεριναὶ νομαὶ εἰς τὴν πόλιν; that is, “ both the night pastures, and those of the day, are adjacent to the city.”

It is evident that the Læstrigons also inhabited Formiæ, a city of Campania near Cajeta: thus Horace, lib. iii. ode 17.

“ Æli vetusto nobilis ab Lamo ———
“ Auctore ab illo ducit originem
“ Qui Formiarum mœnia dicitur
“ Princeps” ———

It was called Hormiæ, according to Strabo, Φορμίαι, Λακωνικὸν κτίσμα, Ὁρμίαι λεγόμενον διὰ τὸ εὐορμον; that is, “ Formiæ was

So near the pastures, and so short the way,
His double toils may claim a double pay,
And join the labours of the night and day. 100 }

Within a long recess a bay there lies,
Edg'd round with cliffs, high pointing to the skies;
The jutting shores that swell on either side
Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.
Our eager sailors seize the fair retreat, 105
And bound within the port their crowded fleet:
For here retir'd the sinking billows sleep,
And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.
I only in the bay refus'd to moor,
And fix'd, without, my halbers to the shore. 110

“ built by a Laconian, called also Hormiæ, from its being an “ excellent station for ships.” Tully had this place in view in his epistle to Atticus, lib. ii. epist. 13. “ Si vero in hanc *τηλέπυλον*, veneris *λαιστρυγονίην*, Formias dico.” And Pliny to the same purpose, lib. iii. cap. 5. “ Oppidum Formiæ, Hormiæ ante dictum, ut existimavere, antiqua Læstrigonum sedes.” But how will this agree with Homer, who places them in Sicily, whilst Tully and Pliny place them in Campania in Italy?

Dacier answers, that they were originally Sicilians, as appears from Pliny, lib. iii. cap. 8. “ Flumina, Symæthus, Terias; intus, Læstrigoniæ campi; oppidum, Leontini.” And why might not these Læstrigons, or a colony of them, leave Sicily to settle in Italy, as it is evident the Phæacians had done, and fixed in Corcyra? Bochart's opinion concerning this nation is not to be neglected; the words Læstrigons and Leontines are of the same import; Læstrigon is a Phœnician name, “ Lais tircam,” that is, “ a devouring lion;” this is rendered literally by the Latin word leontinum, and both denote the savage and leonine disposition of this people; the word lamus is also of Phœnician extract: Laham, or lahama, signifies a devourer; from hence probably was derived that lamia, who devoured young infants, mentioned by Horace in his Art of Poetry.

“ Nec pransæ lamiaæ vivum puerum extrahant alvo.”

We are informed that there was a queen of Lybia of that name by Diodorus Siculus; she was a person of great beauty, but of great barbarity.

v. 109. *I only in the bay refus'd to moor.*] It may appear at the first view, that Ulysses took more care of himself than of his companions; and it may be asked, why did he not restrain them from

From thence we climb'd a point, whose airy brow
 Commands the prospect of the plains below :
 No tracks of beasts, or signs of men we found,
 But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.
 Two with our herald thither we command, 115
 With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.
 They went, and kept the wheel's smooth beaten road
 Which to the city drew the mountain wood ;
 When lo ! they met, beside a crystal spring,
 The daughter of Antiphates the king ; 120

entering the bay, when his caution plainly shews that he was apprehensive of danger? Had he more fear than the rest of the company; No; but a greater foresight; a wise man provides as far as lies within his power against all contingencies, and the event shews, that his companions were rash, and he wise to act with so much circumspection; they stay'd not for command, and therefore were justly punished for acting precipitately without the direction of their general and king.

v. 120. *The daughter of Antiphates, &c.*] It is not evident from whence Ulysses had the knowledge of these particulars; the persons whom he sent to search the land perished in the attempt, or were destroyed by the Læstrigons: how then could this relation be made to Ulysses? It is probable that he had his information from Circe or Calypso, for Circe in the sequel of the Odyssey tells Ulysses, that she was acquainted with all the sufferings that he had undergone by sea; and if she, as a goddess, knew his adventures, why might she not relate to him these particulars? Homer a little lower tells us, that the Læstrigons transfix'd (*παλποῖσι*;) the companions of Ulysses, and then carried them away on their weapons like so many fishes; others prefer *ἔλποισι*, that is, connecting them together like a range of fishes; both which very well express the prodigious strength of these giants: others chuse the word *ἀσπαιποῖσι*, or, "they eat them yet alive (*palpitantes*) like "fishes." The preference is submitted to the reader. Eustathius.

I will only add, that possibly the relation of the barbarity of Polypheme and Antiphates, with respect to their eating the flesh of men, may not be intirely fabulous: modern history assures us, that savages have been found in parts of the world lately discovered, who eat the bodies of their enemies: it is therefore no wonder that the more polite and civilized nations of antiquity looked upon such men as monsters, and that their poets painted them as such, or perhaps aggravated the fierte, or fierceness of their features, struck with horror at their brutal inhumanity.

She to Artacia's silver streams came down,
(Artacia's streams alone supply the town :)
The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race
The people were ? who monarch of the place ?
With joy the maid th' unwary strangers heard, 125
And shew'd them where the royal dome appear'd.
They went ; but as they ent'ring saw the queen
Of size enormous, and terrific mien,
(Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height)
A sudden horror struck their aking sight. 130
Swift at her call her husband scour'd away
To wreak his hunger on the destin'd prey ;
One for his food the raging glutton slew,
But two rush'd out, and to the navy flew.
Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies, 135
And fills the city with his hideous cries ;
A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,
And pouring down the mountains, croud the shore.
Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,
And dash the ruins on the ships below : 140
The crackling vessels burst ; hoarse groans arise,
And mingled horrors echo to the skies ;
The men, like fish, they stuck upon the flood,
And cram'd their filthy throats with human food.
Whilst thus their fury rages at the bay, 145
My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh ;
And charg'd my men, as they from fate would fly,
Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.
The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,
And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas ; 150
Clear of the rocks th' impatient vessel flies ;
Whilst in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.
With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,
While kindling transports glow'd at our success ;
But the sad fate that did our friends destroy, 155
Cool'd ev'ry breast, and damp'd the rising joy.

Now dropp'd our anchors in th' *Ææan* bay,
 Where *Circe* dwelt, the daughter of the day;
 Her mother *Persè*, of old ocean's strain,
 Thus from the sun descended, and the main; 160
 (From the same lineage stern *Æætēs* came,
 The far-fam'd brother of th' enchantress dame)
 Goddesses, and queen, to whom the pow'rs belong
 Of dreadful magic, and commanding song.
 Some god directing, to this peaceful bay 165
 Silent we came, and melancholy lay,

v. 158. *Where Circe dwelt* ———] *Hesiod* in his *Theogony* agrees with *Homer* as to the genealogy of *Circe* and *Æætēs*.

Ἡελίῳ δ' ἀκάμαντι τέκε κλυτὴ ὠκεανίη
 Περσηίς, Κίρκην τε καὶ Αἰήτην βασιλῆα.

That is, "*Perseis* the daughter of *Oceanus* bore to *Phæbus*, "*Circe* and king *Æætēs*." But why are they fabled to be the offspring of the sun? *Eustathius* answers, either from their high birth, as the great personages of antiquity were called *Διογενεῖς*, or the sons of *Jupiter*, and the sun in the ancient mythology represented that deity; or from their extraordinary beauty, which might be compared to the sun, or from their illustrious actions. But perhaps the whole might be derived from the way of speaking among the orientals; at this day we are informed from the best historians, that such language prevails in the eastern countries, and kings and great personages are called the brothers or offspring of the sun.

This *Ææa* is a mountain or promontory in Italy: perhaps originally an island, and still keeping the resemblance of it. Thus *Procopius*, *Gothicorum*, lib. i. "*Circeium* haud modico tractu " in mare porrectum insulæ speciem fert, tam præternaviganti-
 " bus quam terrestri itinere prætereuntibus: and *Strabo*, lib. v. *Κίρκαιον ὄρος νησιάζον θαλάτῃ τε καὶ ἔλκεσι*. But is the relation that *Homer* makes of this island, and of *Circe*, agreeable to truth? Undoubtedly it is not; but *Homer* was very well acquainted with the story of *Medea*, and applies what was reported of that enchantress to *Circe*, and gives the name of *Ææa* to the island of *Circe*, in resemblance to *Ææa*, a city of *Colchos*, the country of *Medea* and *Æætēs*. That *Homer* was not a stranger to the story of *Medea* is evident, for he mentions the ship *Argo* in the twelfth *Odyssey*, in which *Jason* sailed to *Colchos*, where *Medea* fell in love with him; so that though *Circe* be a fabled deity, yet what *Homer* says of her, was applicable to the character of another person, and consequently a just foundation for a story in poetry. With this opinion *Strabo* agrees.

Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd on,
 And now the third succeeding morning shone,
 I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,
 Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land; 170
 To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
 Or chearful voice of mortal strike the ear.
 From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,
 A stream of curling smoke, ascending blue,
 And spiry tops, the tufted trees above, 175
 Of Circe's palace bosom'd in the grove.

Thither to haste, the region to explore,
 Was first my thought: but speeding back to shore
 I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,
 And send out spies the dubious coast to view. 180
 As down the hill I solitary go,
 Some pow'r divine who pities human woe,
 Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,
 To cool his fervour in the crystal flood;
 Luxuriant on the wave-worn bank he lay, 185
 Stretch'd forth, and panting in the sunny ray.

v. 169. *I climb'd a cliff* ———] Scaliger, lib. v. of his Poetics, observes, that there is a general resemblance between Ulysses in Homer, and Æneas in Virgil, and that Æneas acts in the same manner as Ulysses.

“ ——— exire, locesque

“ Explorare novos, quas vento accesserit oras,

“ Qui teneant, (nam inculta videt) hominesne feræne

“ Quærere constituit.”

That critic remarks, that though the attitudes of the two heroes are the same, yet they are drawn by Virgil with a more masterly hand: “Fusior & latior Homerus inveniatur, pictior Virgilius & numeris astrixiôr.”

Ulysses himself here takes a general view of the island, but sends his companions for a more particular information; this was necessary to introduce the following story, and give it an air of probability; if he had made the experiment in his own person, his virtue would have been proof against the sorceries of Circe, and consequently there could not have been room for a description of her enchantments. Eustathius.

I lanch'd my spear, and with a sudden wound
Transpierc'd his back, and fix'd him to the ground.
He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries: 190
Thro' the wide wound the vital spirit flies.

I drew, and casting on the river side
The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I ty'd
With twining osiers, which the bank supply'd. }
An ell in length the pliant wisp I weav'd, 195
And the huge body on my shoulders heav'd:
Then leaning on the spear with both my hands,
Up-bore my load, and press'd the sinking sands
With weighty steps, 'till at the ship I threw
The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew. 200

Chear up, my friends! it is not yet our fate
To glide with ghosts thro' Pluto's gloomy gate.
Food in the desert land, behold! is giv'n,
Live, and enjoy the providence of heav'n.

The joyful crew survey his mighty size,
And on the future banquet feast their eyes, 205
As huge in length extended lay the beast;
Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.
There, 'till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
They sat indulging in the genial rite.
When ev'ning rose, and darkness cover'd o'er 210
The face of things, we slept along the shore.
But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,
My men I summon'd, and these words address.

Followers and friends? attend what I propose:
Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes! 215
We know not here what land before us lies,
Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes, }
Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise. }

v. 218. *Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.* The interpretations of this passage are various; some, says Eustathius, judge these words not to proceed from the ignorance of Ulysses, but that they are the language of despair suggested by his continual

Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)

If any counsel, any hope remain.

220

Alas! from yonder promontory's brow,

I view'd the coast, a region flat and low;

calamities: for how could Ulysses be ignorant of the east or west, when he saw the sun rise and set every day? Others understand it to signify, that he was ignorant of the clime of the world (ὅτην ποσειδῶν κλίμαλος) in which this island lay. Strabo was of opinion, that the appearance of the heavenly bodies, as the stars, &c. were different in this island from the position which he had ever before observed in any country, and therefore he might well confess his ignorance, and express his concern for his almost desperate condition. He understands by ἡδὲ all that region through which the sun passes opposite to the north. It is true, that the four quarters of the world may be supposed to be here mentioned by Ulysses, ἡδὲ may express the southern parts through which the sun passes, and ζόφος the opposite quarter, which may be said comparatively to be ζόφος, or dark? And then the rising and setting of the sun will undeniably denote the eastern and western regions. Spondanus is of opinion, that Homer intended to express the four quarters of the world, otherwise the second verse is a tautology. Dacier calls it an explication of the first description. And indeed the mind of man is apt to dwell long upon any object, by which it is deeply affected, as Ulysses must here be supposed to be, and therefore he might enlarge upon the sentiment advanced in the former line: The meaning then will be this. I know not, says that hero, where this island lies, whether east or west, where the sun rises, or where he sets. I should therefore understand Ulysses to mean, that he knows not how the island lies with respect to the rest of the world, and especially to Ithaca his own country. This is evident from his conduct when he sailed from Formiæ the land of the Læstrigons; for instead of making toward the east where Ithaca lay, he bore to this island of Circe, which lies on the west of Formiæ.

v. 220. *If any counsel, any hope remain.*] This expression may be thought unworthy of the mouth of a hero, and serve only to cause his companions to despair; but in reality it has a double effect; it gives us a lively picture of human nature, which in the greatest men will shew some degrees of sensibility, and at the same time it arms his friends against surprise, and sets the danger they are in full before their eyes, that they may proceed with due circumspection. We do not find that Ulysses abandons himself to despair, he still acts like a brave man, but joins wisdom with bravery, and proceeds at once with the caution of a philosopher, and the spirit of a hero.

An isle incircled with the boundless flood;
 A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
 Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise,
 And all around it only seas and skies!

225

With broken hearts my sad companions flood,
 Mindful of Cyclops and his human food,
 And horrid Læstrigons, the men of blood.
 Presaging tears apace began to rain;
 But tears in mortal miseries are vain.

230

In equal parts I straight divide my band,
 And name a chief each party to command;
 I led the one, and of the other side
 Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide.

235

Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,
 And fortune casts Eurylochus to go:
 He march'd, with twice eleven in his train:
 Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

The palace in a woody vale they found,
 High rais'd of stone; a shaded space around:

240

v. 236. *Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw.*] Dacier is of opinion that Ulysses casts lots out of an apprehension of being disobeyed if he had given positive commands; his companions being so greatly discouraged by the adventures of Polypheme and the Læstrigons. It will be a nobler reason, and more worthy of a hero to say, that Ulysses was so far from declining a common danger, that he submits himself to an equal chance with his companions to undertake it. This expedition appeared very hazardous, and if he had directly commanded a select number of his men to attempt it, they might have thought he had exposed them to almost certain destruction; but the contrary conduct takes away this apprehension, and at the same time shews the bravery of Ulysses, who puts himself upon a level with the meanest of his soldiers, and is ready to expose his person to an equality of danger.

Ulysses divides his men into two bodies: each contains two and twenty men: this is agreeable, observes Eustathius, to the former account of Homer; each vessel carried fifty men, six out of every one were destroyed by the Ciconians, and therefore forty-four is the exact number, inclusive of himself and the surviving company.

Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
(By magic tam'd) familiar to the dome.

v. 242. *Where mountain wolves and brindled lions, &c.*] Virgil has borrowed almost this whole description of Circe, and as Scaliger judges, perhaps with good reason, greatly improved it.

"Hanc exaudiri gemitus iræque leonum
"Vincla recusantum, & ferâ sub nocte rudentum,
"Setigerique fues, atque in præsepibus urfi, &c."

From hence we heard rebellowing from the main,
The roars of lions that refuse the chain,
The grunts of bristled boars, and groans of bears,
And herds of howling wolves that stun the sailors ears:
These from their caverns, at the close of night,
Fill the sad isle with horreur and affright:
Darkling they mourn their fate, whom Circe's pow'r,
That watch'd the moon, and planetary hour,
With words and wicked herbs, from human kind
Had alter'd, and in brutal shapes confin'd. DRYDEN.

It must be confessed, that "*Iræ leonum vincla recusantum*," and the epithets and short descriptions adapted to the nature of each savage, are beautiful additions. Virgil likewise differs from Homer in the manner of the description: Homer draws the beasts with a gentleness of nature; Virgil paints them with the fierceness of savages. The reason of Homer's conduct is, because they still retained the sentiments of men, in the forms of beasts, and consequently their native tenderness.

There is a beautiful moral couched under this fable or allegory: Homer intended to teach, as Eustathius remarks, that pleasure and sensuality debase men into beasts. Thus Socrates understood it, as Xenophon informs us. Perhaps, adds Dacier, by the fawning wolves and lions that guard the portals of Circe's palace, the poet means to represent the attendants of such houses of debauchery, which appear gentle and courteous, but are in reality of a brutal disposition, and more dangerous than lions. But upon what foundation is this fable built? Many writers inform us, that Circe was a famous courtesan, and that her beauty drew her admirers as it were by enchantment. Thus Horace writes,

"——— Circes pocula nosti,
"Quæ si cum fociis stultus, cupidusque bibisset,
"Sub dominâ Meretrice fuisset turpis & excors,
"Vixisset canis immundus, vel amica luto fus."

It is evident that Ulysses had a very intimate commerce with Circe, for Hesiod writes that he had two sons by her, Agrius and Latinus,

With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet. 245

who afterwards reigned in Tuscany; other authors call them Nau-
sithous and Telegonus.

Κίρκη δ' Ἡλίου θυγάτηρ Ὑπεριονίδαο
Γαίνατ' Ὀδυσσῆος ταλίσιφρον ἐν φιλότῃ
Ἄγχιον, ἧδ' Ἀατῖνον.

Dionysius Halicarnassus and Aristotle mention Telegonus as the
son of Circe and Ulysses, who afterwards slew his father with the
bone of a fish inadvertently. Thus Horace,

“Telegoni juga parricidæ.”

But then is not this intrigue a breach of morality, and conjugal
fidelity in that hero? I refer the reader to note on v. 198, of the
fifth book of the *Odyssey*: I shall only add, that the notions of
morality are now very different from what they were in former
ages. Adultery alone was esteemed criminal, and punished with
death by the ancient heathens: concubinage was not only per-
mitted, but thought to be honourable, as appears from the prac-
tice not only of heroes, but even of the pagan deities; and con-
sequently this was the vice of the age, not in particular of Ulysses.
But there is a stronger objection against Ulysses, and it may be
asked, how is he to be vindicated for wasting no less space than a
whole year in dalliance with a harlot? Penelope and his country seem
both forgotten, and consequently he appears to neglect his own
re-establishment, the chief design of the *Odyssey*: what adds some
weight to this observation is, that his companions seem more sen-
sible of his long absence from his country, and regret it more than
that hero; for they awake him out of his dream, and intreat him
to depart from the island. It is therefore necessary to take away
this objection: for if it be unanswerable, Ulysses is guilty of all
the miseries of his family and country, by neglecting to redress
them by returning, and therefore he must cease to be a hero, and
is no longer to be proposed as a pattern of wisdom and imitation,
as he is in the opening of the *Odyssey*. But the stay of Ulysses is
involuntary, and consequently irreproachable; he is in the power
of a deity, and therefore not capable of departing without her per-
mission: this is evident: for upon the remonstrance made by his
companions, he dares not undertake his voyage without her dis-
mission. His asking consent plainly shews that it was not safe, if
practicable, to go away without it; if he had been a free agent,
her leave had been unnecessary: it is true, she tells him she will
not detain him any longer against his inclinations; but this does
not imply that his stay till then had been voluntary, or that he

As from some feast a man returning late,
 His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate.
 Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive,
 (Such as the good man ever used to give.)
 Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near; 250
 They gaze with wonder, not unmix'd with fear.
 Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,
 And heard a voice resounding thro' the wood:
 Plac'd at her loom within, the goddess sung;
 The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung. 255
 O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,
 Immortal labour! worthy hands divine.
 Polites to the rest the question mov'd,
 (A gallant leader, and a man I lov'd.)
 What voice celestial, chanting to the loom 260
 (Or nymph, or goddess) echoes from the room?
 Say shall we seek access? With that they call;
 And wide unfold the portals of the hall.
 The goddess rising, asks her guests to stay,
 Who blindly follow where she leads the way. 265

never had intreated to be dismissed before, but rather intimates the contrary: it only shews that now at last she is willing he should go away. But why should Ulysses stand in need of being admonished by his companions? Does not this imply that he was unmindful of returning? This is only an evidence that they were desirous to return as well as he; but he makes a wise use of their impatience, and takes an occasion from their importunities to press for an immediate dismissal.

In short, I am not pleading for perfection in the character of Ulysses: human nature allows it not, and therefore it is not to be ascribed to it in poetry. But if Ulysses were here guilty, his character ceases to be of a piece: we no longer interest ourselves in his misfortunes, since they are all owing to his own folly: the nature of the poem requires, that he should be continually endeavouring to restore his affairs: if then he be here sunk into a lethargy, his character is at once lost, his calamities are a just punishment, and the moral of the *Odyssey* is destroyed, which is to shew wisdom and virtue rewarded, and vice and folly punished by the death of the suitors, and re-establishment of Ulysses.

Eurylochus alone of all the band,
 Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.
 On thrones around with downy cov'rings grac'd,
 With semblance fair th' unhappy men she plac'd.
 Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat, 270
 And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat:
 But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
 With drugs of force to darken all the soul:

v. 272. *But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl.*] It is an undoubted truth, that Homer ascribes more power to these magical drugs and incantations than they have in reality; but we are to remember that he is speaking before a credulous audience, who readily believed these improbabilities, and at the same time he very judiciously provides for the satisfaction of his more understanding readers, by couching an excellent moral under his fables, viz. that by indulging our appetites we sink below the dignity of human nature, and degenerate into brutality.

I am not in the number of those who believe that there never were any magicians who performed things of an uncommon nature: the story of Jannes and Jambres, of the witch of Endor, and Simon Magus, are undeniable instances of the contrary. Magic is supposed to have been first practised in Ægypt, and to have spread afterwards among the Chaldeans: it is very evident that Homer had been in Ægypt, where he might hear an account of the wonders performed by it. Dacier is of opinion, that these deluders, or magicians, were mimics of the real miracles of Moses, and that they are described with a wand, in imitation of that great prophet.

But if any person thinks that magic is mere fable, and never had any existence, yet established fame and common opinion justify a poet for using it. What has been more ridiculed than the winds being inclosed in a bag by Æolus, and committed to Ulysses? But as absurd as this appears, more countries than Lapland pretend to the power of selling a storm or a fair wind at this day, as is notorious from travellers of credit; and perhaps a poet would not even in these ages be thought ridiculous, if, speaking of Lapland, he should introduce one of these Venefica's, and describe the ceremonies she used in the performance of her pretended incantations. Milton not unhappily has introduced the imagined power of these Lapland witches into his Paradise Lost,

—— The night-hag, when call'd
 In secret, riding thro' the air she comes,
 Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
 With Lapland witches, while the lab'ring moon
 Eclipses at their charms. ———

Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
 And drank oblivion of their native coast. 275
 Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,
 To hogs transforms 'em, and the sty receives.
 No more was seen the human form divine;
 Head, face, and members, bristle into swine:
 Still curst with sense, their minds remain alone, 280
 And their own voice affrights them when they groan.
 Meanwhile the goddess in disdain bestows
 The mast and acorn, brutal food! and strows
 The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around;
 Now prone and grov'ling on unsav'ry ground. 285
 Eurylochus with pensive steps and slow,
 Aghast returns; the messenger of woe,
 And bitter fate. To speak he made essay
 In vain essay'd, nor would his tongue obey,
 His swelling heart deny'd the words their way: 290
 But speaking tears the want of words supply,
 And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.

In short, Virgil has imitated Homer in all these bold episodes, and Horace calls them the miracles of the *Odyssey*.

v. 278. *No more was seen the human form divine, &c.*] Longinus here reports a criticism of Zoilus; he is very pleasant upon this transformation of the companions of Ulysses, and calls them, "the squeaking pigs of Homer;" we may gather from this instance the nature of his criticisms, and conjecture that they tended to turn the finest incidents of Homer into ridicule. Burlesque was his talent, and instead of informing the reason by pointing out the errors of the poem, his only aim was to make his readers laugh; but he drew upon himself the indignation of all the learned world: he was known by the name of the vile Thracian slave, and lived in great want and poverty; and posterity prosecutes his memory with the same animosity. The man was really very learned, as Dionysius Halicarnassus informs us: his morals were never reproached, and yet, as Vitruvius relates, he was crucified by Ptolemy, or as others write, stoned to death, or burnt alive at Smyrna; so that his only crime was his defamation of Homer: a tragical instance of the great value which was set upon his poetry by antiquity, and of the danger of attacking a celebrated author with malice and envy.

Affrighted, anxious for our fellows fates,
We press to hear what sadly he relates.

We went, Ulysses! (such was thy command) 295
Thro' the lone thicket, and the desert land.

v. 295, &c. *We went, Ulysses! (such was thy command.)*] We have here a very lively picture of a person in a great fright, which was admired, observes Eustathius, by the ancients. There is not only a remarkable harmony in the flowing of the poetry, but the very manner of speaking represents the disorder of the speaker; he is in too great an emotion to introduce his speech by any preface, he breaks at once into it, without preparation, as if he could not soon enough deliver his thoughts. Longinus quotes these lines as an instance of the great judgment of Homer: there is nothing, says that critic, which gives more life to a discourse, than the taking away the connections and conjunctions; when the discourse is not bound together and embarrassed, it walks and slides along of itself, and will want very little oftentimes of going faster even than the thought of the orator: thus in Xenophon, "Joining their bucklers, they gave back, they fought, they slew, they dy'd together;" of the same nature is that of Eurylochus.

We went, Ulysses — such was thy command —
Access we fought — nor was access deny'd :
Radiant she came — the portals open'd wide, &c.
I only wait behind — of all the train ;
I waited long — and ey'd the doors in vain :
The rest are vanish'd — none repass'd the gate.

These periods thus cut off, and yet pronounced with precipitation, are signs of a lively sorrow; which at the same time hinders, yet forces him to speak.

Many such sudden transitions are to be found in Virgil, of equal beauty with this of Homer :

" Me, me, inquam qui feci, in me convertite tela."

Here the poet shews the earnestness of the speaker, who is in so much haste to speak, that his thoughts run to the end of the sentence almost before his tongue can begin it. Thus Achæmenides in his flight from the Cyclops,

" ————— Per fidera testor,
" Per superos, atque hoc cæli spirabile lumen,
" Tollite me, Teucri."

Here the poet makes no connection with the preceding discourse, but leaves out the "inquit," to express the precipitation and terror of Achæmenides.

But our countryman Spenser has equalled, if not surpassed these great poets of antiquity, in painting a figure of terror in the

A palace in a woody vale we found
 Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.
 A voice celestial echo'd from the dome,
 Or nymph, or goddess, chanting to the loom. 300
 Access we sought, nor was access deny'd :
 Radiant she came; the portals open'd wide :
 The goddess mild invites the guests to stay :
 They blindly follow where she leads the way.
 I only wait behind, of all the train; 305
 I waited long, and ey'd the doors in vain :

ninth canto of the *Fairy Queen*, where *sir Trevisan* flies from despair.

He answer'd nought at all : but adding new
 Fear to his first amazement, staring wide
 With stony eyes, and heartless hollow hue,
 Astonish'd stood, as one that had espy'd
 Infernal furies, with their chains unty'd;
 Him yet again, and yet again bespake
 The gentle knight; who nought to him reply'd;
 But trembling ev'ry joint did inly quake,
 And falt'ring tongue, at last these words seem'd forth to
 shake,
 For God's dear love, *sir knight*, do me not stay,
 For lo! he comes, he comes, fast after me,
 Eft looking back, would fain have run away.

The description sets the figure full before our eyes, he speaks short, and in broken and interrupted periods, which excellently represent the agony of his thoughts; and when he is a little more confirmed and emboldened, he proceeds,

And am I now in safety sure, quoth he,
 From him who would have forced me to die?
 And is the point of death now turn'd from me?
 Then I may tell this hapless history.

We see he breaks out into interrogations, which, as *Longinus* observes, gives great motion, strength, and action to discourse. If the poet had proceeded simply, the expression had not been equal to the occasion; but by these short questions, he gives strength to it, and shews the disorder of the speaker, by the sudden starts and vehemence of the periods. The whole canto of despair is a piece of inimitable poetry; the picture of *sir Trevisan* has a general resemblance to this of *Eurylochus*, and seems to have been copied after it, as will appear upon comparison.

The rest are vanish'd, none repass'd the gate;
And not a man appears to tell their fate.

I heard, and instant o'er my shoulders flung
The belt in which my weighty falchion hung; 310
(A beamy blade) then seiz'd the bended bow,
And bade him guide the way, resolv'd to go.
He, prostrate falling, with both hands embrac'd
My knees, and weeping thus his suit address'd.

O king belov'd of Jove! thy servant spare, 315
And ah, thyself the rash attempt forbear!
Never, alas! thou never shalt return,
Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn.
With what remains from certain ruin fly,
And save the few not fated yet to die. 320

I answer'd stern. Inglorious then remain,
Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train.

v. 313. *With both hands embrac'd my knees* ———] The character of Eurylochus, who had married Climene the sister of Ulysses, is the character of a brave man, who being witness to the dreadful fate of his companions is diffident of himself, and judges that the only way to conquer the danger is to fly from it. To fear upon such an occasion, observes Dacier, is not cowardice, but wisdom. But what is more remarkable in this description, is the art of Homer in inserting the character of a brave man under so great a consternation, to set off the character of Ulysses, who knows how at once to be bold and wise; for the more terrible and desperate the adventure is represented by Eurylochus, the greater appears the intrepidity of Ulysses, who trusting to his own wisdom, and the assistance of the gods, has the courage to attempt it. What adds to the merit of the action is, that he unsolicited for his companions, as Horace describes him:

“ Dum tibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
“ Pertulit, adversis rerum immerfabilis undis,”

v. 321. ——— *Inglorious then remain,
Here feast and loiter* ———]

This expression is used sarcastically by Ulysses, and in derision of his fears. Dacier remarks, that Ulysses having not seen what is related by Eurylochus, believes his refusal to return, proceeds from his faint-heartedness: an instance, adds she, that we frequently form wrong judgments of mens actions, when we are ignorant of

Alone, unfriended will I tempt my way;
The laws of fate compel, and I obey.

This said, and scornful turning from the shore 325
My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er.

'Till now approaching nigh the magic bow'r,
Where dwelt th' enchantress skill'd in herbs of pow'r;
A form divine forth issu'd from the wood,
(Immortal Hermes with the golden rod) 330

In human semblance, On his bloomy face
Youth smil'd celestial, with each op'ning grace.
He seiz'd my hand, and gracious thus began.

Ah whither roam'st thou? much-enduring man!
O blind to fate! what led thy steps to rove 335
The horrid mazes of this magic grove?

Each friend you seek in yon' inclosure lies,
All lost their form, and habitants of sties.
Think'st thou by wit to model their escape?
Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape, 340
Fall prone their equal: first thy danger know,
Then take the antidote the gods bestow.

The plant I give thro' all the direful bow'r
Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.
Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes 345
The bowl shall sparkle, and the banquet rise;
Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,
For temper'd drugs and poison shall be vain.

the motives of them. I confess I am of opinion, that there is some degree of cowardice in the character of Eurylochus: a man truly brave would not express such confusion and terrour, in any extremity; he is not to be inspirited either by Ulysses, or the example of his other companions, as appears from the sequel, inasmuch that Ulysses threatens to kill him for a coward; this prevails over his first fears, and he submits to meet a future danger, merely to avoid one that is present. What makes this observation more just is, that we never see a brave man drawn by Homer or Virgil in such faint colours; but they always discover a presence of mind upon all emergencies.

Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,
 Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword, 350
 And menace death: those menaces shall move
 Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.
 Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,
 Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms:
 So shall thy tedious toils a respite find, 355
 And thy lost friends return to human kind.
 But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie
 The pow'rs below, the blessed in the sky;
 Lest to thee naked secret fraud be meant,
 Or magic bind thee, cold and impotent. 360

Thus while he spoke, the sov'reign plant he drew,
 Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,

v. 361. ——— the sov'reign plant he drew,

Where on th' all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew, &c.]

This whole passage is to be understood allegorically. Mercury is reason, he being the god of science: the plant which he gives as a preservative against incantation is instruction; the root of it is black, the flower white and sweet; the root denotes that the foundation or principles of instruction appear obscure and bitter, and are distasteful at first, according to that saying of Plato, "The beginnings of instruction are always accompanied with reluctance and pain." The flower of Moly is white and sweet; this denotes that the fruits of instruction are sweet, agreeable, and nourishing. Mercury gives this plant; this intimates, that all instruction is the gift of heaven: Mercury brings it not with him, but gathers it from the place where he stands, to shew that wisdom is not confined to places, but that every where it may be found, if heaven vouchsafes to discover it, and we are disposed to receive and follow it. Thus Isocrates understands the allegory of Moly; he adds, Πικρὰν εἶναι ῥίζαν αὐτῆς, τὸ δὲ Μῶλον ἄνθος λευκὸν κατὰ γάλα, διὰ τὴν τῷ τελευτῆς παιδείας λαμπρότητα, ἥδὴ ἡ-τὸ ἥδὴ ἡ τροφίμων. The root of Moly is bitter, but the flower of it white as milk, to denote the excellency of instruction, as well as the pleasure and utility of it in the end. He further illustrates the allegory, by adding Κάρπες τῆς παιδείας εἰ ἢ μὴ γάλακτι ἰκέλεις, ἀλλὰ γλυκεῖς, &c. That is, "the fruits of instruction are not only white as milk, but sweet, though they spring from a bitter root." Eustathius.

Maximus Tyrius also gives this story an allegorical sense, dissert. xvi. αὐτὸν μὲν τὸν Ὀδυσσεῖα ἔχ' ὄρεας, ὡς παντοίας συμφοραῖς ἀντιτεχνάμενος ἀρετῇ ζῶσει, τὺτο αὐτῷ τὸ ἐκ Κέρκης Μῶλον, τὺτο τὸ

And shew'd its nature and its wond'rous pow'r :
 Black was its root, but milky-white the flow'r ;
 Moly the name, to mortals hard to find, 365
 But all is easy to th' ætherial kind.

This Hermes gave, then gliding off the glade,
 Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.

While full of thought, revolving fates to come,
 I speed my passage to th' enchanted dome : 370
 Arriv'd, before the lofty gates I stay'd ;
 The lofty gates the goddess wide display'd ;
 She leads before, and to the feast invites ;
 I follow sadly to the magic rites.

Radiant with starry studs, a silver seat 375
 Receiv'd my limbs ; a footstool eas'd my feet.

ἐν θαλάτῃ κρήδεμνον ; that is, "Dost thou not observe Ulysses, how
 " by opposing virtue to adversity he preserves his life? This is the
 " Moly that protects him from Circe, this is the scarf that de-
 " livers him from the storm, from Polypheme, from hell, &c."
 See also dissert. xix.

It is pretended that Moly is an Ægyptian plant, and that it
 was really made use of as a preservative against enchantments :
 but I believe the Moly of Mercury, and the Nepenthe of Helen,
 are of the same production, and grow only in poetical ground.

Ovid has translated this passage in his *Metamorphosis*, lib. xiv.

" Pacifer huic dederat florem Cyllenius album ;
 " Moly vocant superi, nigrâ radice tenetur, &c."

There is a remarkable sweetness in the verse which describes the
 appearance of Mercury in the shape of a young man ;

—— Νενίκη ἀνδρὶ ἰοικῶς
 Πρῶτον ὑπηνήτη τῷ πέρ χαριεράτη ἦεν.

—— On his bloomy face
 Youth smil'd celestial ——

Virgil was sensible of the beauty of it, and imitated it ;

" Ora puer primâ signans intonso juventâ,"

But in the opinion of Macrobius, he falls short of Homer, lib. v.
 saturn. 13. " Prætermisâ gratiâ incipientis pubertatis τῷ πῆρ
 " χαριεράτη, minus gratam fecit Latinam descriptionem."

She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul;
 The poison mantled in the golden bowl.
 I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n:
 Then wav'd the wand, and then the word was giv'n.
 Hence to thy fellows! (dreadful she began) 381
 Go, be a beast!—I heard, and yet was man.

Then sudden whirling, like a waving flame,
 My beamy falchion, I assault the dame.
 Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries, 385
 She faints, she falls; she lifts her weeping eyes.

What art thou? say! from whence, from whom you
 came?

O more than human! tell thy race, thy name.
 Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain!
 Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain. 390
 Or art thou he? the man to come (foretold
 By Hermes pow'rful with the wand of gold)
 The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round;
 The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
 Ulysses? oh! thy threat'ning fury cease, 395
 Sheath thy bright sword, and join our hands in peace;
 Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
 And love, and love-born confidence be thine.

v. 379. *I took, and quaff'd it, confident in heav'n.*] It may be asked if Ulysses is not as culpable as his companions, in drinking this potion? Where lies the difference? and how is the allegory carried on, when Ulysses yields to the solicitation of Circe, that is pleasure, and indulges, not resists his appetites? The moral of the fable is, that all pleasure is not unlawful, but the excess of it: we may enjoy, provided it be with moderation. Ulysses does not taste till he is fortified against it; whereas his companions yielded without any care or circumspection; they indulged their appetites only, Ulysses takes merely out of a desire to deliver his associates: he makes himself master of Circe, or pleasure, and is not in the power of it, and enjoys it upon his own terms; they are slaves to it, and out of a capacity ever to regain their freedom but by the assistance of Ulysses. The general moral of the whole fable of Circe is, that pleasure is as dreadful an enemy as danger, and a Circe as hard to be conquered as a Polypheme,

And how, dread Circe! (furious I rejoin)
 Can love, and love-born confidence be mine! 400
 Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
 Transform'd to beasts, with accents not their own.
 O thou of fraudulent heart! shall I be led
 To share thy feast-rites, or ascend thy bed;
 That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent, 405
 And magic bind me, cold and impotent?
 Celestial as thou art, yet stand deny'd;
 Or swear that oath by which the gods are ty'd,
 Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,
 Swear, by the vow which never can be vain. 410
 The goddess swore: then seiz'd my hand, and led
 To the sweet transports of the genial bed.
 Ministrant to their queen, with busy care
 Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare;

v. 403. ——— Shall I be led
 To share thy feast-rites ———]

Eustathius observes, that we have here the picture of a man truly wise, who when pleasure courts him to indulge his appetites, not only knows how to abstain, but suspects it to be a bait to draw him into some inconveniencies: a man should never think himself in security in the house of a Circe. It may be added, that these apprehensions of Ulysses are not without a foundation; from this intercourse with that goddess, Telegonus sprung, who accidentally slew his father Ulysses.

v. 414. *Four faithful handmaids, &c.*] This large description of the entertainment in the palace of Circe, is particularly judicious; Ulysses is in a house of pleasure, and the poet dwells upon it, and shews how every circumstance contributes to promote and advance it. The attendants are all nymphs, and the bath and perfumes usher in the feast and wines. The four verses that follow, are omitted by Dacier, and they are marked in Eustathius as superfluous; they are to be found in other parts of the *Odyssey*; but that, I confess, would be no argument why they should not stand here (such repetitions being frequent in Homer) if they had a due propriety, but they contain a tautology. We see before a table spread for the entertainment of Ulysses, why then should that circumstance be repeated? If they are omitted, there will no chasm or incoherence appear, and therefore probably they were not originally inserted here by Homer.

Nymphs sprung from fountains, or from shady woods,
Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods. 416

One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,
Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view :
White linen lay beneath. Another plac'd
The silver stands with golden flasks grac'd : 420

With dulcet bev'rage this the beaker crown'd,
Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around :
That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile
The water pours ; the bubbling waters boil :
An ample vase receives the smoking wave ; 425

And, in the bath prepar'd, my limbs I lave :
Reviving sweets repair the mind's decay,
And take the painful sense of toil away.
A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,

Fresh from the bath and dropping balmy dew ; 430
Then led and plac'd me on the sov'reign seat,
With carpets spread ; a footstool at my feet.

The golden ew'r a nymph obsequious brings,
Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs ;
With copious water the bright vase supplies 435
A silver laver of capacious size.

I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,
They heap the glitt'ring canisters with bread ;
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and flavour, rich repast ! 440

Circe in vain invites the feast to share ;
Absent I ponder, and absorpt in care :
While scenes of woe rose anxious in my breast
The queen beheld me, and these words address.

Why sits Ulysses silent and apart, 445
Some hoard of grief close-harbour'd at his heart ?
Untouch'd before thee stand the cates divine,
And unregarded laughs the rosy wine.
Can yet a doubt, or any dread remain,
When sworn that oath which never can be vain ? 450

I answer'd, Goddess! humane is thy breast,
 By justice sway'd, by tender pity prest:
 Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,
 To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.
 Me would'st thou please? for them thy cares employ,
 And them to me restore, and me to joy. 456

With that, she parted: in her potent hand
 She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
 Then hast'ning to the sties set wide the door,
 Urg'd forth, and drove the bristly herd before; 460
 Unwieldy, out they rush'd, with gen'ral cry,
 Enormous beasts dishonest to the eye.
 Now touch'd by counter-charms, they change agen,
 And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.
 Those hairs of late that bristled ev'ry part, 465
 Fall off; miraculous effect of art!
 'Till all the form in full proportion rise,
 More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
 They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace
 Clung to their master in a long embrace: 470
 Sad, pleasing sight! with tears each eye ran o'er,
 And sobs of joy re-echo'd thro' the bow'r:
 Ev'n Circe wept, her adamantine heart
 Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

Son of Laertes! (then the queen began) 475
 Oh much-enduring, much-experienc'd man!
 Haste to thy vessel on the sea-beat shore,
 Unload thy treasures, and the gally moor;
 Then bring thy friends, secure from future harms,
 And in our grottoes stow thy spoils and arms. 480

v. 468. *More young, — more graceful to my eyes.*] Homer excellently carries on his allegory: he intends by this expression of the enlargement of the beauty of Ulysses's companions, to teach that men who turn from an evil course, into the paths of virtue, excel even themselves; having learned the value of virtue from the miseries they suffered in pursuit of vice, they become new men, and as it were enjoy a second life. Eustathius.

She said. Obedient to her high command
 I quit the place, and hasten to the strand.
 My sad companions on the beach I found,
 Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.
 As from fresh pastures and the dewy field 485
 (When loaded cribs their ev'ning banquet yield)
 The lowing herds return; around them throng
 With leaps and bounds their late-imprison'd young,
 Rush to their mothers with unruly joy,
 And echoing hills return the tender cry: 490
 So round me press'd exulting at my sight,
 With cries and agonies of wild delight,
 The weeping sailors; nor less fierce their joy
 Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.

v. 485. *As from fresh pastures and the dewy field, &c.*] If this simile were to be rendered literally, it would run thus: "as calves seeing the droves of cows returning at night when they are filled with their pasturage, run skipping out to meet them; the stalls no longer detain them, but running round their dams they fill the plain with their lowings, &c." If a similitude of this nature were to be introduced into modern poetry, I am of opinion it would fall under ridicule for a want of delicacy: but in reality, images drawn from nature, and a rural life, have always a very good effect; in particular, this before us enlivens a melancholy description of sorrows, and so exactly expresses in every point the joy of Ulysses's companions, we see them in the very description. To judge rightly of comparisons, we are not to examine if the subject from whence they are derived be great or little, noble or familiar, but we are principally to consider if the image produced be clear and lively, if the poet have skill to dignify it by poetical words, and if it perfectly paints the thing it is intended to represent. This rule fully vindicates Homer: though he frequently paints low life, yet he never uses terms which are not noble; or if he uses humble words or phrases, it is with so much art, that, as Dionysius observes, they become noble and harmonious. In short, a top may be used with propriety and elegance in a similitude by a Virgil, and the sun may be dishonoured by a Mævius; a mean thought expressed in noble terms being more tolerable, than a noble thought disgraced by mean expressions. Things that have an intrinsic greatness need only to be barely represented to fill the soul with admiration, but it shews the skill of a poet to raise low subject, and exalt common appearances into dignity.

Ah master! ever honour'd, ever dear, 495
 (These tender words on ev'ry side I hear)
 What other joy can equal thy return?
 Not that lov'd country for whose sight we mourn,
 The foil that nurs'd us, and that gave us breath:
 But ah! relate our lost companions death. 500

I answer'd chearful. Haste, your gally moor,
 And bring our treasures and our arms ashore:
 Those in yon' hollow caverns let us lay;
 Then rise and follow where I lead the way.
 Your fellows live: believe your eyes, and come 505
 To take the joys of Circe's sacred dome.

With ready speed the joyful crew obey:
 Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.
 Whither (he cry'd) ah whither will ye run?
 Seek ye to meet those evils ye shou'd shun? 510
 Will you the terrours of the dome explore,
 In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,
 Or wolf-like howl away the midnight hour
 In dreadful watch around the magic bow'r?
 Remember Cyclops, and his bloody deed; 515
 The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.

I heard incens'd, and first resolv'd to speed
 My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
 Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
 This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the ground;
 But all at once my interposing train 521
 For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.

[v. 515. *Remember Cyclops, &c.*] The poet paints Eurylochus uniformly, under great disorder of mind and terrible apprehensions: there is no similitude between Circe and Cytlops, with respect to the usage of the companions of Ulysses; but Homer puts these expressions into his mouth, to represent the nature of terror, which confounds the thoughts, and consequently distracts the language of a person who is possessed by it. The character therefore of Eurylochus is the imitation of a person confounded with fears, speaking irrationally and incoherently. Eustathius.

Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,
 Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,
 To guard the ship. Seek ye the sacred shades 525
 Of Circe's palace, where Ulysses leads.

This with one voice declar'd, the rising train
 Left the black vessel by the murm'ring main.
 Shame touch'd Eurylochus's alter'd breast,
 He fear'd my threats, and follow'd with the rest. 530

Meanwhile the goddess, with indulgent cares
 And social joys, the late transform'd repairs;
 The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews;
 Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dew:
 Bright'ning with joy their eager eyes behold 535
 Each other's face, and each his story told;
 Then gushing tears the narrative confound,
 And with their sobs the vaulted roofs resound.
 When hush'd their passion, thus the goddess cries;
 Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise; 540
 Let this short memory of grief suffice.

To me are known the various woes ye bore,
 In storms by sea, in perils on the shore;
 Forget whatever was in fortune's pow'r,
 And share the pleasures of this genial hour. 535
 Such be your minds as e'er ye left your coast,
 Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.
 Exiles and wand'rers now, where-e'er ye go,
 Too faithful memory renews your woe;
 The cause remov'd, habitual griefs remain, 550
 And the soul saddens by the use of pain.

Her kind intreaty mov'd the gen'ral breast;
 Tir'd with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.
 We ply'd the banquet, and the bowl we crown'd,
 'Till the full circle of the year came round. 555
 But when the seasons, following in their train,
 Brought back the months, the days, and hours again;

As from a lethargy at once they rise,
And urge their chief with animating cries.

Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot? 560
And is the name of Ithaca forgot?
Shall never the dear land in prospect rise,
Or the lov'd palace glitter in our eyes?

Melting I heard; yet 'till the sun's decline
Prolong'd the feast, and quaff'd the rosy wine: 565
But when the shades came on at ev'ning hour,
And all lay slumb'ring in the dusky bow'r;
I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,
The tender moment seiz'd, and thus I said.

Be mindful, goddess, of thy promise made; 570
Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd?
Around their lord my sad companions mourn,
Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return:
If but a moment parted from thy eyes,
Their tears flow round me, and my heart complies.

Go then (she cry'd) ah go! yet think not I, 576
Not Circe, but the fates your wish deny.
Ah hope not yet to breathe thy native air!
Far other journey first demands thy care;
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 580
And view the realms of darkness and of death.

v. 579. *Far other journey ———
To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath.]*

There should in all the episodes of epic poetry appear a convenience, if not a necessity of every incident; it may therefore be asked what necessity there is for this descent of Ulysses into hell; to consult the shade of Tiresias? Could not Circe, who was a goddess, discover to him all the future contingencies of his life? Eustathius excellently answers this objection; Circe declares to Ulysses the necessity of consulting Tiresias, that he may learn from the mouth of that prophet, that his death was to be from the ocean; she acts thus in order to dispose him to stay with her, after his return from the regions of the dead: or if she cannot persuade him to stay with her, that she may at least secure him from returning to her rival Calypso; she had promised immortality, but

There seek the Theban bard, depriv'd of sight;
 Within, irradiate with prophetick light;
 To whom Persephone, entire and whole,
 Gave to retain th' unseparated soul :

585

by this descent, he will learn that it is decreed that he should receive his death from the ocean; for he died by the bone of a sea-fish called Xiphias. Her love for Ulysses induces her not to make the discovery herself, for it was evident she would not find credit, but Ulysses would impute it to her love, and the desire she had to deter him from leaving her island. This will appear more probable, if we observe the conduct of Circe in the future parts of the *Odyssey*: she relates to him the dangers of Scylla and Charybdis, of the oxen of Phæbus, and the Sirens; but says nothing concerning his death: this likewise gives an air of probability to the relation. The isle of Circe was adjoining to Scylla and Charybdis, &c. and consequently she may be supposed to be acquainted with those places, and give an account of them to Ulysses with exactness, but she leaves the decrees of heaven and the fate of Ulysses to the narration of the prophet, it best suiting his character to see into futurity. By the descent of Ulysses into hell may be signified, that a wise man ought to be ignorant of nothing; that he ought to ascend in thought into heaven, and understand the heavenly appearances, and be acquainted with what is contained in the bowels of the earth, and bring to light the secrets of nature: that he ought to know the nature of the soul, what it suffers, and how it acts after it is separated from the body. Eustathius.

v. 584. *To whom Persephone, &c.*] Homer here gives the reason why Tiresias should be consulted, rather than any other ghost, because

Τὸ τε φρενὲς ἐμπεδοί εἰσι.

This expression is fully explained, and the notion of the soul after death, which prevailed among the ancients, is set in a clear light, verse 92, and 124, of the *xxiiiid* book of the *Iliad*, to which passages I refer the readers. But whence had Tiresias this privilege above the rest of the dead? Callimachus ascribes it to Pluto.

Καὶ μόνῳ εὖτε θάνη, πεπνυμένῳ ἐν νεκύεσσιν
 Φοῖλάσει, μεγάλῳ τίμειῳ Ἀγροσία.

Tully mentions this pre-eminence of Tiresias in his first book of *Divination*. Perhaps the whole fiction may arise from his great reputation among the antients for prophecy; and in honour to his memory they might imagine that his soul after death retained the same superiority. Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* gives us a very jocular reason for the blindness and prophetick knowledge of Tiresias, from a matrimonial contest between Jupiter and Juno. Cato Major, as Plutarch in his *Political Precepts* informs us, applied

The rest are forms, of empty Æther made;
Impassive semblance, and a flitting shade.

Struck at the word, my very heart was dead :
Pensive I sat ; my tears bedew'd the bed ;
To hate the light and life my soul begun, 590
And saw that all was grief beneath the sun.

Compos'd at length, the gushing tears suppress,
And my tost limbs now weary'd into rest,
How shall I tread (I cry'd) ah Circe ! say,
The dark descent, and who shall guide the way ? 595
Can living eyes behold the realms below ?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow ?

Thy fated road (the magick pow'r reply'd)
Divine Ulysses ! asks no mortal guide.
Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display, 600
The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.
Soon shalt thou reach old ocean's utmost ends,
Where to the main the shelving shore descends ;

this verse to Scipio, when he was made consul contrary to the Roman statutes.

Οἶδς πέπνυται, τοὶ δὲ σκιάι αἰσέουσιν.

But I ought not to suppress what Diodorus Siculus relates concerning Tiresias. Biblioth. lib. iv. he tells us, that he had a daughter named Daphne, a priestess at Delphi. Παρ' ἧς φασὶ καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν Ὅμηρον πολλὰ τῶν ἐπῶν σφειρίσασθαι, κοσμεῖν αὖ τὴν ἰδίαν ποίησιν. That is, "From whom it is said, that the poet Homer received many (of the Sibyls) verses, and adorned his own poetry with them." If this be true, there lay a debt of gratitude upon Homer, and he pays it honourably, by this distinguishing character, which he gives to the father. An instance of a worthy disposition in the poet, and it remains at once an honour to Tiresias, and a monument of his own gratitude.

This descent of Ulysses into hell has a very happy effect, it gives Homer an opportunity to embellish his poetry with an admirable variety, and to insert fables and histories that at once instruct and delight. It is particularly happy with respect to the Phæacians, who could not but highly admire a person whose wisdom had not only delivered him from so many perils on earth, but had been permitted by the gods to see the regions of the dead, and return among the living ; this relation could not fail of pleasing an audience, delighted with strange stories, and extraordinary adventures.

v. 602. *Soon shalt thou reach old ocean's utmost ends, &c.*] This whole scene is excellently imagined by the poet, as Eustathius ob-

The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,
Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods: 605

serves; the trees are all barren, the place is upon the shores where nothing grows; and all the rivers are of a melancholy signification, suitable to the ideas we have of those infernal regions. Ulysses arrives at this place, where he calls up the shades of the dead, in the space of one day; from whence we may conjecture, that he means a place that lies between Cumæ and Gaïæ, near the lake Avernus, in Italy; which, as Strabo remarks, is the scene of the necromancy of Homer, according to the opinion of antiquity. He further adds, that there really are such rivers as Homer mentions, though not placed in their true situation, according to the liberty allowable to poetry. Others write, that the Cimmerii once inhabited Italy, and that the famous cave of Pausilippe was begun by them about the time of the Trojan wars: here they offered sacrifice to the manes, which might give occasion to Homer's fiction. The Grecians, who inhabited these places after the Cimmerians, converted these dark habitations into stoves, baths, &c.

Silius Italicus writes, that the Lucrine lake was antiently called Cocytus, lib. xii.

"Ast hic Lucrinæ mansisse vocabula quondam

"Cocyti memorat." — —

It is also probable, that Acheron was the antient name of Avernus, because Acherusia, a large water near Cumæ, flows into it by concealed passages. Silius Italicus informs us, that Avernus was also called Styx.

"Ille olim populis dictum Styga, nomine verso,

"Stagna inter celebrem nunc mitia monstrat Avernum."

Here Hannibal offered sacrifice to the manes, as it is recorded by Livy; and Tully affirms it from an antient poet, from whom he quotes the following fragment;

"Inde in viciniâ nostrâ Averni lacus,

"Unde animæ excitantur obscurâ umbra,

"Alti Acherontis aperte ostio."

This may seem to justify the observation that Acheron was once the name of Avernus, though the words are capable of a different interpretation.

If these remarks be true, it is probable that Homer does not neglect geography, as most commentators judge. Virgil describes Æneas descending into hell by Avernus, after the example of Homer. Milton places these rivers in hell and beautifully describes their natures, in his Paradise Lost.

— — — Along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge

There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,
 And enter there the kingdoms void of day :
 Where Phlegeton's loud torrents rushing down,
 His in the flaming gulf of Acheron ;
 And where, slow-rolling from the Stygian bed, 610
 Cocytus' lamentable waters spread :
 Where the dark rock o'erhangs th' infernal lake,
 And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.
 First draw thy falchion, and on ev'ry side
 Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide : 615
 To all the shades around libations pour,
 And o'er th' ingredients strow the hallow'd flour :
 New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring,
 And living water from the crystal spring.
 Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore, 620
 With promis'd off'rings on thy native shore ;
 A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,
 And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile :
 These to the rest ; but to the seer must bleed
 A fable ram, the pride of all thy breed, 625
 These solemn vows and holy offerings paid
 To all the phantom-nations of the dead ;

Into the burning lake their baleful streams,
 Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate ;
 Sad Acheron, of sorrow, black and deep :
 Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud
 Heard on the rueful stream : fierce Phlegeton,
 Whose waves of torrent-fire inflame with rage ;
 Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
 Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
 Her watry labyrinth, whereof who drinks
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.

Thus also agreeably to the idea of hell the offerings to the infernal powers are all black, the Cimmerians lie in a land of darkness ; the heifer which Ulysses is to offer is barren, like that in Virgil.

“ — Sterilemque tibi, Proserpina, Væcam ; ”

to denote that the grave is unfruitful, that it devours all things, that it is a place where all things are forgotten,

Be next thy care the fable sheep to place
 Full o'er the pit, and hell-ward turn their face :
 But from th' infernal rite thine eye withdraw, 630
 And back to ocean glance with rev'rend awe.

Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades
 Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.
 Then give command the sacrifice to haste,
 Let the slay'd victims in the flame be cast, 635

And sacred vows, and mystick song, apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride.

Wide o'er the pool, thy falchion wav'd around
 Shall drive the spectres from forbidden ground :
 The sacred draught shall all the dead forbear, 640
 'Till awful from the shades arise the seer.

Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
 The turns of all thy future fate, display,
 Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day. }

So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone 645
 The morn conspicuous on her golden throne.

The goddess with a radiant tunick drest
 My limbs, and o'er me cast a filken vest.
 Long flowing robes, of purest white, array
 The nymph, that added lustre to the day : 650

A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold ;
 Her waste was circled with a zone of gold.
 Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew ;
 Rouse man by man, and animate my crew.

Rise, rise my mates ! 'tis Circe gives command : 655
 Our journey calls us ; haste, and quit the land.
 All rise and follow, yet depart not all,
 For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.

A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd,
 Not much for sense, nor much for courage fam'd ; 660

v. 659. *A youth there was, Elpenor was he nam'd.*] Homer dis-
 misses not the description of this house of pleasure and debauch,
 without shewing the moral of his fable, which is the ill conse-

The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul
 Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.
 He, hot and careless, on a turret's height
 With sleep repair'd the long debauch of night :
 The sudden tumult stirr'd him where he lay, 665
 And down he hasten'd, but forgot the way ;
 Full endlong from the roof the sleeper fell,
 And snapp'd the spinal joint, and wak'd in hell.
 The rest crowd round me with an eager look ;
 I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke. 670
 Already, friends ! ye think your toils are o'er,
 Your hopes already touch your native shore :
 Alas ! far otherwise the nymph declares,
 Far other journey first demands our cares ;
 To tread th' uncomfortable paths beneath, 675
 The dreary realms of darkness and of death :
 To seek Tiresias' awful shade below,
 And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.

quences that attend those who indulge themselves in sensuality ; this is set forth in the punishment of Elpenor. He describes him as a person of no worth, to shew that debauchery enervates our faculties, and renders both the mind and body incapable of thinking, or acting with greatness and bravery. At the same time these circumstantial relations are not without a good effect ; for they render the story probable, as if it were spoken with the veracity of an history, not the liberty of poetry.

I will conclude this book with a paragraph from Plutarch's *Morals* : it is a piece of advice to the fair sex, drawn from the story of Circe and Ulysses. " They who bait their hooks (says this philosopher) with intoxicated drugs may catch fish with little trouble ; but then they prove dangerous to eat, and unpleasant to the taste : thus women who use arts to ensnare their admirers, become wives of fools and mad-men : they whom the forcerefs Circe enchanted, were no better than brutes ; and she used them accordingly, inclosing them with sties ; but she loved Ulysses intirely, whose prudence avoided her intoxications, and made his conversation agreeable. Those women who will not believe that Pasiphae was ever enamoured of a bull, are yet themselves so extravagant, as to abandon the society of men of sense and temperance, and to betake themselves to the embraces of brutal and stupid fellows." Plut. *Conjugal Precepts*,

My sad companions heard in deep despair ;
Frantick they tore their manly growth of hair ; 680
To earth they fell ; The tears began to rain ;
But tears in mortal miseries are vain.
Sadly they far'd along the sea-beat shore ;
Still heav'd their hearts, and still their eyes ran o'er.
The ready victims at our bark we found, 685
The fable ewe, and ram, together bound.
For swift as thought, the goddess had been there,
And thence had glided, viewless as the air :
The paths of gods what mortal can survey ?
Who eyes their motion ? who shall trace their way ? 690

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The descent into hell.

Ulysses continues his narration; how he arrived at the land of the Cimmerians, and what ceremonies he performed to invoke the dead. The manner of his descent, and the apparition of the shades: his conversation with Elpenor, and with Tiresias, who informs him in a prophetick manner of his fortunes to come. He meets his mother Anticlea, from whom he learns the state of his family. He sees the shades of the antient heroines, afterwards of the heroes, and converses in particular with Agamemnon and Achilles. Ajax keeps at a sullen distance, and disdains to answer him. He then beholds Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, Hercules: till he is deterred from further curiosity by the apparition of horrid spectres, and the cries of the wicked in torments.

NOW to the shores we bend, a mournful train,
Climb the tall bark, and lanch into the main:
At once the mast we rear, at once unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind:

* The antients called this book *Νεκρομαντεία*, or *Νεκύια*, the book of necromancy: because (says Eustathius) it contains an interview between Ulysses and the shades of the dead.

Virgil has not only borrowed the general design from Homer, but imitated many particular incidents: L'Abbé-Fraguier in the *Memoirs of Literature* gives his judgment in favour of the Roman poet, and justly observes, that the end and design of the journey is more important in Virgil than in Homer. Ulysses descends to con-

Then pale and pensive stand, with cares oppress'd, 5
And solemn horror saddens ev'ry breast.

sult Tiresias, Æneas his father. Ulysses takes a review of the shades of celebrated persons that preceded his times, or whom he knew at Troy, who have no relation to the story of the *Odyssey*: Æneas receives the history of his own posterity; his father instructs him how to manage the Italian war, and how to conclude it with honour; that is, to lay the foundations of the greatest empire in the world; and the poet by a very happy address takes an opportunity to pay a noble compliment to his patron Augustus. In the *Æneid* there is a magnificent description of the descent and entrance into hell; and the "diseases, cares and terrours" that Æneas sees in his journey, are very happily imagined, as an introduction into the regions of death: whereas in Homer there is nothing so noble, we scarce are able to discover the place where the poet lays his scene, or whether Ulysses continues below or above the ground. Instead of a descent into hell, it seems rather a conjuring up, or an evocation of the dead from hell; according to the words of Horace, who undoubtedly had this passage of Homer in his thoughts. *Satyr viii. lib. i.*

" — — Scalpere terram

" Unguis, & pullam divellere mordicus agnam

" Cœperunt; cruor in fossam confusus, ut inde

" Manes elicerent, animas responsa daturas."

But if it be understood of an evocation only, how shall we account for several visions and descriptions in the conclusion of this book? Ulysses sees Tantalus in the waters of hell, and Sisyphus rolling a stone up an infernal mountain; these Ulysses could not conjure up, and consequently must be supposed to have entered at least the borders of those infernal regions. In short, Fraguier is of opinion, that Virgil profited more by the *Frogs* of Aristophanes than by Homer: and Mr. Dryden prefers the sixth book of the *Æneid* to the eleventh of the *Odyssey*, I think with very great reason.

I will take this opportunity briefly to mention the original of all these fictions of infernal rivers, judges, &c. spoken of by Homer, and repeated and enlarged by Virgil. They are of *Ægyptian* extract, as Mr. Sandys (that faithful traveller, and judicious poet) observes, speaking of the mummies of Memphis, p. 134.

" These ceremonies performed, they laid the corpse in a boat to be wafted over Acherusia, a lake on the south of Memphis, by one only person, whom they called Charon; which gave Orpheus the invention of his infernal ferryman; an ill-favoured slovenly fellow, as Virgil describes him, *Æneid vi.* About this lake stood the shady temple of Hecate, with the ports of Cocytus and Oblivion, separated by bars of brass, the original of like fables. When landed on the other side, the bodies were brought

A freshning breeze the * magick pow'r supply'd,
 While the wing'd vessel flew along the tide;
 Our oars we shipp'd : all day the swelling sails
 Full from the guiding pilot catch'd the gales.

10

Now sunk the sun from his aerial height,
 And o'er the shaded billows rush'd the night:
 When lo ! we reach'd old ocean's utmost bounds,
 Where rocks controll his waves with ever-during
 mounds.

“ before certain judges : if convicted of an evil life, they were deprived of burial ; if otherwise, they were suffered to be interred.” This explication shews the foundation of those antient fables of Charon, Rhadamanthus, &c. and also that the poets had a regard to truth in their inventions, and grounded even their fables upon some remarkable customs, which grew obscure and absurd only because the memory of the customs to which they allude is lost to posterity.

I will only add from Dacier, that this book is an evidence of the antiquity of the opinion of the soul's immortality. It is upon this that the most antient of all divinations was founded, I mean that which was performed by the evocation of the dead. There is a very remarkable instance of this in the holy scripture, in an age not very distant from that of Homer. Saul consults one of these infernal agents to call up Samuel, who appears, or some evil spirit in his form, and predicts his impending death and calamities. This is a pregnant instance of the antiquity of necromancy, and that it was not of Homer's invention ; it prevailed long before his days among the Chaldeans, and spread over all the oriental world. Æschylus has a Tragedy intitled *Perfæ*, in which the shade of Darius is called up, like that of Samuel, and foretells queen Atossa all her misfortunes. Thus it appears that there was a foundation for what Homer writes ; he only embellishes the opinions of antiquity with the ornaments of poetry.

I must confess that Homer gives a miserable account of a future state ; there is not a person described in happiness, unless perhaps it be *Tiresias* : the good and the bad seem all in the same condition : whereas Virgil has an hell for the wicked, and an *Elysium* for the just. Though perhaps it may be a vindication of Homer to say, that the notions of Virgil of a future state were different from those of Homer ; according to whom hell might only be a receptacle for the vehicles of the dead, and that while they were in hell, their *φῆν* or spirit might be in heaven, as appears from what is said of the *εἰδωλον* of Hercules in this xith book of the *Odyssey*.

There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells, 15
 The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells ;
 The sun ne'er views th' uncomfortable seats,
 When radiant he advances, or retreats :

v. 15. *There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells,
 The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells.*]

It is the opinion of many commentators, that Homer constantly in these voyages of Ulysses makes use of a fabulous geography ; but perhaps the contrary opinion in many places may be true : in this passage, Ulysses in the space of one day sails from the island of Circe to the Cimmerians : now it is very evident from Herodotus and Strabo, that they inhabited the regions near the Bosphorus, and consequently Ulysses could not sail thither in the compass of a day ; and therefore, says Strabo, the poet removes not only the Cimmerians, but their climate and darkness, from the northern Bosphorus into Campania in Italy.

But that there really were a people in Italy named Cimmerians is evident from the testimony of many authors. So Lycophron plainly understands this passage, and relates these adventures as performed in Italy. He recapitulates all the voyages of Ulysses, and mentioning the descent into hell, and the Cimmerians, he immediately describes the infernal rivers, and adds, (speaking of the Apennine)

Ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα χύτλα, καὶ παῖσαι μυχῶν
 Πηλαί, κατ' Αἰσονίτιν ἔλκονται χθόνα.

That is, "From whence all the rivers, and all the fountains flow
 " through the regions of Italy." And these lines of Tibullus,

" Cimmerion etiam obscuras accessit ad arces,
 " Quis nunquam candente dies apparuit ortu,
 " Sive supra terras Phæbus, seu curreret infra."

are understood by all interpreters to denote the Italian Cimmerians : who dwelt near Baiæ and the lake Avernus ; and therefore Homer may be imagined not entirely to follow a fabulous geography. It is evident from Herodotus that these Cimmerians were antiently a powerful nation ; for passing into Asia (says that author in his Clio) they possessed themselves of Sardis, in the time of Ardyes, the son of Gyges. If so, it is possible they might make several settlements in different parts of the world, and call those settlements by their original name, Cimmerians, and consequently there might be Italian, as well as Scythian Cimmerians.

It must be allowed, that this horrid region is well chosen for the descent into hell : it is described as a land of obscurity and horrors, and happily imagined to introduce a relation concerning the realms of death and darkness.

Unhappy race! whom endless night invades,
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades. 20

The ship we moor on these obscure abodes;
Dis-bark the sheep, an off'ring to the gods;
And hell-ward bending, o'er the beach descry
The doleful passage to th' infernal sky.
The victims, vow'd to each Tartarean pow'r, 25
Eurylochus and Perimedes bore.

Here open'd hell, all hell I here implor'd,
And from the scabbard drew the shining sword;
And trenching the black earth on ev'ry side,
A cavern form'd, a cubit long and wide. 30
New wine, with honey-temper'd milk, we bring,
Then living waters from the crystal spring;
O'er these was strew'd the consecrated flour,
And on the surface shone the holy store.

v. 31. *New wine, with honey-temper'd milk.*] The word in the original is, *μελίκραλον*, which (as Eustathius observes) the ancients constantly understood to imply a mixture of honey and milk; but all writers who succeeded Homer as constantly used it to signify a composition of water mixed with honey. The Latin poets have borrowed their magical rites from Homer: thus Ovid, *Metam.* vii. 243.

"Haud procul, egestâ scrobibus tellure duabus,
"Sacra facit: cultusque in guttur velleris atri
"Conjicit; & patulas perfundit sanguine fossas.
"Tum super invergens tepidi carchesia lactis
"Alteraque infundens liquidi carchesia mellis," &c.

Thus also Statius:

"— Tellure cavatâ
"Inclinat Bacchi latices, & munera verni
"Lactis, & Actæos imbres," &c.

This libation is made to all the departed shades; but to what purpose (objects Eustathius) should these rites be paid to the dead, when it is evident from the subsequent relation that they were ignorant of these ceremonies till they had tasted the libation? He answers from the ancients, that they were merely honorary to the regents of the dead, Pluto and Proserpina; and used to obtain their leave to have an interview with the shades in their dominions.

Now the wan shades we hail, th' infernal gods, 35
 To speed our course, and waft us o'er the floods :
 So shall a barren heifer from the stall
 Beneath the knife upon your altars fall ;
 So in our palace, at our safe return
 Rich with unnumber'd gifts the pile shall burn ; 40
 So shall a ram the largest of the breed,
 Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed.

Thus solemn rites and holy vows we paid
 To all the phantom-nations of the dead.
 Then dy'd the sheep ; a purple torrent flow'd, 45
 And all the caverns smok'd with streaming blood.
 When lo ! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
 Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts ;

v. 47. *When lo ! appear'd along the dusky coasts,
 Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts.]*

We are informed by Eustathius, that the antients rejected these six verses, for say they, these are not the shades of persons newly slain, but who have long been in these infernal regions : how then can their wounds be supposed still to be visible, especially through their armour, when the soul was separated from the body ? Neither is this the proper place for their appearance, for the poet immediately subjoins, that the ghost of Elpenor was the first that he encountered in these regions of darkness. But these objections will be easily answered by having recourse to the notions which the antients entertained concerning the dead ; we must remember that they imagined that the soul though freed from the body had still a vehicle, exactly resembling the body ; as the figure in a mould retains the resemblance of the mould, when separated from it ; the body is but as a case to this vehicle, and it is in this vehicle that the wounds are said to be visible ; this was supposed to be less gross than the mortal body, and less subtil than the soul ; so that whatever wounds the outward body received when living, were believed to affect this inward substance, and consequently might be visible after separation.

It is true that the poet calls the ghost of Elpenor the first ghost, but this means the first whom he knew : Elpenor was not yet buried, and therefore was not yet received into the habitation of the dead, but wanders before the entrance of it. This is the reason why his shade is said to present itself the foremost : it comes not up from the realm of death, but descends towards it from the upper world.

Fair, penfive youths, and soft enamour'd maids ;
 And wither'd elders, pale and wrinkled shades ; 50
 Ghastly with wounds the forms of warriors slain
 Stalk'd with majestick port, a martial train :
 These and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,
 And all the dire assembly shriek'd around.
 Astonish'd at the sight, aghast I stood, 55
 And a cold fear ran shiv'ring thro' my blood ;
 Straight I command the sacrifice to haste,
 Straight the slay'd victims to the flames are cast,
 And mutter'd vows, and mystick song apply'd
 To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride. 60

But these shades of the warriors are said still to wear their armour in which they were slain, for the poet adds that it was stained with blood : how is it possible for these ghosts, which are only a subtil substance, not a gross body, to wear the armour they wore in the other world ? How was it conveyed to them in these infernal regions ? All that occurs to me in answer to this objection is, that the poet describes them suitably to the characters they bore in life ; the warriors on earth are warriors in hell ; and that he adds these circumstances only to denote the manner of their death, which was in battle or by the sword. No doubt but Homer represents a future state according to the notions which his age entertained of it, and this sufficiently justifies him as a poet, who is not obliged to write truths, but according to fame and common opinions.

But to prove these verses genuine, we have the authority of Virgil : he was too sensible of their beauty not to adorn his poems with them. Georg. iv. 470.

“ At cantu commotæ Erebi de sedibus imis
 “ Umbrae ibant tenues, simulacraque luce carentum,
 “ Matres, atque viri, defunctaque corpora vitæ
 “ Magnanimùm heroum, pueri, innuptæque puellæ,
 “ Impositique rogis juvenes,” &c.

It must be confessed that the Roman poet omits the circumstance of the armour in his translation, as being perhaps contrary to the opinions prevailing in his age ; but in the sixth book he describes his heroes with arms, horses, and infernal chariots ; and in the story of Deiphobus we see his shade retain the wounds in hell, which he received at the time of his death in Troy.

“ ——— Lacerum crudelitur ora
 “ Deiphobum vidi,” &c.

Now swift I wav'd my falchion o'er the blood ;
 Back started the pale throngs, and trembling stood.
 Round the black trench the gore untasted flows,
 'Till awful from the shades Tiresias rose.

There, wand'ring thro' the gloom I first survey'd, 65
 New to the realms of death, Elpenor's shade :
 His cold remains all naked to the sky
 On distant shores unwept, unburied lie.
 Sad at the sight I stand, deep fix'd in woe,
 And e'er I spoke the tears began to flow. 70

O say what angry pow'r Elpenor led .
 To glide in shades, and wander with the dead ?
 How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,
 Out-fly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind ?

v. 73. *How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,
 Out-fly the nimble sail ?*]

Eustathius is of opinion, that Ulysses speaks pleasantly to Elpenor, for were his words to be literally translated they would be, " Elpenor, thou art come hither on foot, sooner than I in a ship." I suppose it is the worthless character of Elpenor that led that critick into this opinion ; but I should rather take the sentence to be spoken seriously, not only because such railleries are an insult upon the unfortunate, and levities perhaps unworthy of epick poetry, but also from the general conduct of Ulysses, who at the sight of Elpenor burst into tears, and compassionates the fate of his friend. Is there any thing in this that looks like raillery ? if there be, we must confess that Ulysses makes a very quick transition from sorrow to pleasantry. The other is a more noble sense, and therefore I have followed it, and it excellently paints the surprise of Ulysses at the unexpected sight of Elpenor, and expresses his wonder that the soul, the moment it leaves the body, should reach the receptacle of departed shades.

But it may be asked what connexion this story of Elpenor has to the subject of the poem, and what it contributes to the end of it ? Bossu very well answers that the poet may insert some incidents that make no part of the fable or action ; especially if they be short, and break not the thread of it ; this before us is only a small part of a large episode, which the poet was at liberty to insert or omit, as contributed most to the beauty of his poetry : besides, it contains an excellent moral, and shews us the ill effects of drunkenness and debauchery. The poet represents Elpenor as a person of a mean character, and punishes his crime with sudden death, and dishonour.

The ghost reply'd : To hell my doom I owe, 75
 Dæmons accurst, dire ministers of woe!
 My feet thro' wine unfaithful to their weight,
 Betray'd me tumbling from a tow'ry height,
 Stagg'ring I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,
 Lux'd the neck-joint — my soul descends to hell. 80

I will only add that Virgil treads in the footsteps of Homer, and Misenus in the *Æneid*, is the Elpenor of the *Odyssey* : there is indeed some difference ; Misenus suffers for his presumption, Elpenor for his debauchery.

v. 75. ——— *To hell my doom I owe,
 Dæmons accurst, dire ministers of woe.]*

The words in the original are, Ἄσσι με Δαίμονες αἴσα. The identity of sound in *αἴσα* and *αἴσα* may perhaps appear a little inharmonious, and shock the ear. It is a known observation that the nice ears in the court of Augustus could not pardon Virgil for a like similitude of cadence in this verse.

“ At regina Pyrâ ” ———

But these are rather negligencies than errors ; they are indeed to be avoided, but a great genius sometimes overlooks such niceties, and sacrifices sound to sense.

The words of Quintilian are very opposite to this purpose, lib. viii. c. 3. “ Ejusdem verbi aut sermonis iteratio, quanquam non magis noperè summis authoribus vitata, interim vitium videri potest ; in quod sæpe incidit etiam Cicero, securus tam parvæ observationis.” He brings an instance of it from his oration for Cluentius, “ Non solum igitur illud judicium, judicii simile, judices, non fuit.” It must be confessed, that the sense is not only darkened, but the ear shocked at the repetition of the same word in the same period.

This is a very pregnant instance, that the opinion of an evil dæmon or genius prevailed in the days of Homer : but this excuse of Elpenor, in ascribing his calamity to a dæmon, gives great offence to Maximus Tyrius, he being a Stoic philosopher. He says Elpenor is guilty of falsehood in this excuse to Ulysses : for dæmons, parcs, &c. are nothing but the idle pretext of wicked men, who are industrious to transfer their own follies to the gods, according to those verses in the beginning of the *Odyssey* :

Why charge mankind on heav'n their own offence,
 And call their woes the crime of providence ?
 Blind ! who themselves their miseries create,
 And perish by their folly, not their fate.

But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,
 By the soft tie and sacred name of friend !
 By thy fond consort ! by thy father's cares !
 By lov'd Telemachus's blooming years !
 For well I know that soon the heav'nly pow'rs 85
 Will give thee back to day, and Circe's shores :
 There pious on my cold remains attend,
 There call to mind thy poor departed friend,
 The tribute of a tear is all I crave,
 And the possession of a peaceful grave. 90
 But if unheard, in vain compassion plead,
 Revere the gods, the gods avenge the dead !
 A tomb along the wat'ry margin raise,
 The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,
 To shew posterity Elpenor was. 95
 There high in air, memorial of my name,
 Fix the smooth oar, and bid me live to fame.

To whom with tears ; These rites, oh mournful shade,
 Due to thy ghost, shall to thy ghost be paid.

Still as I spoke the phantom seem'd to moan, 100
 Tear follow'd tear, and groan succeeded groan.
 But as my waving sword the blood surrounds,
 The shade withdrew, and mutter'd empty sounds.

There as the wond'rous visions I survey'd,
 All pale ascends my royal mother's shade : 105

v. 105. *All pale ascends my royal mother's shade.* The behaviour of Ulysses with respect to his mother may appear not sufficiently tender and affectionate ; he refrains all manner of address to her, a conduct which may be censured as inconsistent with filial piety ; but Plutarch very fully answers this objection. " It is (says that author) a remarkable instance of the prudence of Ulysses, who descending into the regions of the dead, refused all conference even with his mother, till he had obtained an answer from Tiresias, concerning the business which induced him to undertake that infernal journey." A wise man is not inquisitive about things impertinent ; accordingly Ulysses first shews himself a wise man, and then a dutiful son. Besides, it is very judicious in Homer thus to describe Ulysses : the whole design of the *Odyssey* is the return of

A queen, to Troy she saw our legions pass;
Now a thin form is all Anticlea was!

Struck at the sight I melt with filial woe,
And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow,
Yet as I shook my falchion o'er the blood,
Regardless of her son the parent stood.

110

When lo! the mighty Theban I behold;
To guide his steps he bore a staff of gold;
Awful he trod! majestic was his look!
And from his holy lips these accents broke.

115

Why, mortal, wand'rest thou from chearful day,
To tread the downward, melancholy way?
What angry gods to these dark regions led
Thee yet alive, companion of the dead?

But sheath thy poniard, while my tongue relates
Heav'n's steadfast purpose, and thy future fates.

120

Ulysses to his country; this is the mark at which the hero should continually aim, and therefore it is necessary that all other incidents should be subordinate to this; and the poet had been blameable if he had shewed Ulysses entertaining himself with amusements, and postponing the considerations of the chief design of the *Odyssey*. Lucian speaks to the same purpose in his piece upon astrology.

v. 120. *But sheath thy poniard.*——] The terrour which the shades of the departed express at the sight of the sword of Ulysses has been frequently censured as absurd and ridiculous: “*Risum cui non moveat,*” says Scaliger, “*cum enssem ait & vulnera me tuiſſe?*” What have the dead to fear from a sword, who are beyond the power of it, by being reduced to an incorporeal shadow? But this description is consistent with the notions of the antients concerning the dead. I have already remarked, that the shades retained a vehicle, which resembled the body, and was liable to pain as well as the corporeal substance; if not, to what purpose are the furies described with iron scourges, or the vulture tearing the liver of Tityus?

Virgil ascribes the like fears to the shades in the *Æneis*; for the Sibyl thus commands *Æneas*;

“*Tuque invade viam, vaginâque eripe ferrum.*”

And the shades of the Greeks are there said to fly at the sight of his arms.

While yet he spoke, the prophet I obey'd,
 And in the scabbard plung'd the glitt'ring blade:
 Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then exprest
 Dark things to come, the counsels of his breast. 125

Weary of light, Ulysses here explores,
 A prosp'rous voyage to his native shores;
 But know — by me unerring fates disclose
 New trains of dangers, and new scenes of woes;
 I see! I see, thy bark by Neptune tost, 130
 For injur'd Cyclops, and his eye-ball lost!
 Yet to thy woes the gods decree an end,
 If heav'n thou please; and how to please attend!
 Where on Trinacrian rocks the ocean roars,
 Graze num'rous herds along the verdant shores; 135
 Tho' hunger preys, yet fly the dang'rous prey,
 The herds are sacred to the god of day,
 Who all surveys with his extensive eye
 Above, below, on earth and in the sky!
 Rob not the god, and so propitious gales 140
 Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails:
 But if his herds ye seize, beneath the waves
 I see thy friends o'erwhelm'd in liquid graves!
 The direful wreck Ulysses scarce survives!
 Ulysses at his country scarce arrives! 145

“ At Danaûm proceres, Agamemnoniæque Phalanges

“ Ut vidère virum, fulgentiaque arma per umbras

“ Ingenti trepidare metu.”

Tiresias is here described consistently with the character before given him by the poet, I mean with a pre-eminence above the other shades; for (as Eustathius observes) he knows Ulysses before he tastes the ingredients; a privilege not claimed by any other of the infernal inhabitants. Elpenor indeed did the same, but for another reason; because he was not yet buried, nor entered the regions of the dead, and therefore his soul was yet intire.

v. 145. *Ulysses at his country scarce arrives!*] The poet conducts this interview with admirable judgment. The whole design of Ulysses is to engage the Phæacians in his favour, in order to his transportation to his own country; how does he bring this about?

Strangers thy guides ! nor there thy labours end,
 New foes arise, domestic ills attend !
 There foul adult'ers to thy bride resort,
 And lordly gluttons riot in thy court.
 But vengeance hastes again ! These eyes behold 150
 The deathful scene, princes on princes roll'd !
 That done, a people far from sea explore,
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,

By shewing that it was decreed by the gods that he should be conducted thither by strangers ; so that the Phæacians immediately conclude, that they are the people destined by heaven to conduct him home ; to give this the greater weight, he puts the speech into the mouth of the prophet Tiresias, and exalts his character in an extraordinary manner, to strengthen the credit of the prediction : by this method likewise the poet interweaves his episode into the texture and essence of the poem, he makes this journey into hell contribute to the restoration of his hero, and unites the subordinate parts very happily with the main action.

v. 152. *That done, a people far from sea explore,
 Who ne'er knew salt. ———]*

It is certain that Tiresias speaks very obscurely, after the manner of the oracles ; but the antients generally understood this people to be the Epirots. Thus Pausanias in his Attics. Οἱ μὲν δὲ ἀλύ-
 σης ἰλίη θάλασσαν, μὲν δὲ ἀλσὶν ἠπίσαντο χερῶν δαι, μαρτυρεῖ δὲ μὲν
 ὁ Ὀμήρου ἐπὶ ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐα.

——— Οἱ ἐκ Ἰασσι θάλασσαν.

That is ; “ The Epirots even so lately as after the taking of Troy,
 “ were ignorant of the sea, and the use of salt, as Homer testifies
 “ in his Odyssey : ”

Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar.

So that they who were ignorant of the sea, were likewise ignorant of the use of salt, according to Homer : whence it may be conjectured, that the poet knew of no salt but what was made of seawater. The other token of their ignorance of the sea was, that they should not know an oar, but call it a corn-van. This verse was once sarcastically applied to Philip of Macedon by Amerdion a Grecian, who flying from him and being apprehended, was asked whither he fled ? He bravely answered, to find a people who knew not Philip.

Εἶσθε τὰς ἀφικώμαι, οἱ ἐκ Ἰασσι Φίλιππον.

Or saw gay vessel stem the wat'ry plain,
 A painted wonder flying on the main ! 155
 Bear on thy back an oar : with strange amaze
 A shepherd meeting thee, the oar surveys,
 And names a van : there fix it on the plain,
 To calm the god that holds the wat'ry reign ;
 A threefold off'ring to his altar bring, 160
 A bull, a ram, a boar ; and hail the ocean king.
 But home return'd, to each ætherial pow'r
 Slay the due victim in the genial hour :
 So peaceful shalt thou end thy blisful days,
 And steal thyself from life by slow decays : 165
 Unknown to pain, in age resign thy breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death :

* I persuade myself that this passage is rightly translated ; Νῆας φοινικοπαρήκας and τὰ τε πτερὰ νευσὶ πέλονται.

A painted wonder, flying on the main,
 for the wings of the ship signify the sails, (as Eustathius remarks)
 and not the oars, as we might be misled to conclude from the im-
 mediate connexion with ἔρετρα, or oars. The poet, I believe, in-
 tended to express the wonder of a person upon his first sight of a
 ship, who observing it to move swiftly along the seas, might mis-
 take the sails for wings, according to that beautiful description of
 Mr. Dryden upon a like occasion in his Indian Emperor.

The objects I could first distinctly view,
 Were tall straight trees which on the waters flew ;
 Wings on their sides instead of leaves did grow,
 Which gather'd all the breath the winds could blow ;
 And at their roots grew floating palaces, &c.

Eustathius tells us the reason of this command given to Ulysses, to
 search out a people ignorant of the sea ; it was in honour of Nep-
 tune, to make his name regarded by a nation which was entirely
 a stranger to that deity ; and this injunction was laid by way of
 atonement for the violence offered to his son Polyphemus.

Many critics have imagined that this passage is corrupted ; but,
 as Eustathius observes, we have the authority of Sophocles to prove
 it genuine, who alluding to this passage, writes,

* Ωμοις ἀθηρόεσσον ἔσανον φέρον.

v. 167. *When late stern Neptune points the shaft with death.*] The
 death of Ulysses is related variously, but the following account is

To the dark grove retiring as to rest,
Thy people blessing, by thy people blest !

Unerring truths, oh man, my lips relate ; 170
This is thy life to come, and this is fate.

To whom unmov'd : If this the gods prepare ;
What heav'n ordains, the wise with courage bear.
But say, why yonder on the lonely strands,
Unmindful of her son, Anticlea stands ? 175

Why to the ground she bends her downcast eye ?
Why is she silent, while her son is nigh ?
The latent cause, oh sacred seer reveal !

Nor this, replies the seer, will I conceal.
Know ; to the spectres, that thy bev'rage taste, 180
The scenes of life recur, and actions past ;
They, seal'd with truth, return the sure reply ;
The rest, repell'd, a train oblivious fly.

chiefly credited: Ulysses had a son by Circe named Telegonus, who being grown to years of maturity, failed to Ithaca in search of his father; where seizing some sheep for the use of his attendants, the shepherds put themselves into a posture to rescue them; Ulysses being advertised of it, went with his son Telemachus to repel Telegonus, who in defending himself wounded Ulysses, not knowing him to be his father. Thus Appian, Virginius, and Dictys relate the story. Many poets have brought it upon the stage, and Aristotle criticizing upon one of these tragedies gives us the title of it, which was, "Ulysses Wounded." But if Ulysses thus died, how can Neptune be said to "point the shaft with death?" We are informed that the spear with which Telegonus gave the wound, was pointed with the bone of a sea turtle; so that literally his death came from the sea, or ἐξ ἁλός: and Neptune being the god of the ocean, his death may without violence be ascribed to that deity. It is true, some critics read ἐξ ἁλός as one word, and then it will signify that Ulysses should escape the dangers of the sea, and die upon the continent far from it; but the former sense is most consonant to the tenour of the poem, through which Neptune is constantly represented as an enemy to Ulysses.

I will only add the reason why Ulysses is enjoined to offer a bull, a ram, and a boar to Neptune: the bull represents the roaring of the sea in storms; the ram the milder appearance of it when in tranquillity: the boar was used by the ancients as an emblem of fecundity, to represent the fruitfulness of the ocean. This particular sacrifice of three animals was called τριπύα. Eustathius.

The phantom-prophet ceas'd, and sunk from sight
To the black palace of eternal night. 185

Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,
When near Anticlea mov'd, and drank the blood.
Straight all the mother in her soul awakes,
And owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks.
Com'st thou, my son, alive, to realms beneath, 190
The doleful realms of darkness and of death :
Com'st thou alive from pure, ætherial day ?
Dire is the region, dismal is the way !
Here lakes profound, there floods oppose their waves,
There the wide sea with all his billows raves ! ~ 195
Or (since to dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs)
Com'st thou a wand'rer from the Phrygian shores ?
Or say, since honour call'd thee to the field,
Hast thou thy Ithaca, thy bride beheld ?

v. 195. *There the wide sea with all his billows raves.*] If this passage were literally translated, it would run thus : " My son, how didst thou arrive at this place of darkness, when so many rivers, and the ocean lie in the midway ?" This (says Eustathius) plainly shews that Homer uses a fabulous geography ; for whereas the places that are mentioned in these voyages of Ulysses are really situated upon the Mediterranean, Anticlea here says that they lie in the middle of the ocean. But this is undoubtedly an error : the whole of the observation depends upon the word μέσσω ; but why must this denote the " midway " so exactly ? Is it not sufficient to say, that " between " Ithaca and this infernal region, rivers and the ocean roll ? And that this is the real meaning is evident from this book ; for Ulysses sails in the space of one day from the island of Circe to the place where he descends : how then could these places where Ulysses touches in his voyage lie in the middle of the ocean, unless we can suppose he passed half the ocean in one day ? The poet directly affirms, that he descends at the extremity of it ; but this extremity is no more than one day's voyage from the island of Circe, and consequently that island could not lie in the middle of the ocean : therefore this place is no evidence that Homer uses a fabulous geography.

Eustathius very justly observes, that Homer judiciously places the descent into hell at the extremity of the ocean : for it is natural to imagine that to be the only passage to it, by which the sun and the stars themselves appear to descend, and sink into the realms of darkness.

Book XI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 105

Source of my life, I cry'd, from earth I fly 200
To seek Tiresias in the nether sky,

To learn my doom : for tost from woe to woe,
In ev'ry land Ulysses finds a foe :
Nor have these eyes beheld my native shores,
Since in the dust proud Troy submits her tow'rs. 205

But, when thy soul from her sweet mansion fled,
Say, what distemper gave thee to the dead ?
Has life's fair lamp declin'd by slow decays,
Or swift expir'd it in a sudden blaze ?

Say, if my fire, good old Laertes, lives ? 210

If yet Telemachus, my son, survives ?

Say, by his rule is my dominion aw'd,

Or crush'd by traitors with an iron rod ?

Say, if my spouse maintains her royal trust,
Tho' tempted chaste, and obstinately just ? 215

Or if no more her absent lord she wails,

But the false woman o'er the wife prevails ?

Thus I, and thus the parent-shade returns.

Thee, ever thee, thy faithful consort mourns :

Whether the night descends, or day prevails, 220

Thee she by night, and thee by day bewails,

v. 218. — *Thus the parent-shade returns.*] The questions which Ulysses asks (remarks Eustathius) could not fail of having a very good effect upon his Phæacian audience : by them he very artfully (and, as it seems, undesignedly) lets them into the knowledge of his dignity, and shews the importance of his person ; to induce them to a greater care to conduct him to his country. The process of the whole story is so artfully carried on, that Ulysses seems only to relate an accidental interview, while he tacitly recommends himself, and lets them know the person who asks their assistance is a king. It is observable that Anticlea inverts the order in her answer, and replies last to the first question. Orators always reserve the strongest argument for the conclusion, to leave it fresh upon the memory of their auditors ; or rather, the poet uses this method to introduce the sorrow of Ulysses for the death of his mother more naturally : he steals away the mind of the reader from attending the main action, to enliven it with a scene of tenderness and affection in these regions of horror.

Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys ;
 In sacred groves celestial rites he pays,
 And shares the banquet in superiour state,
 Grac'd with such honours as become the great. 225
 Thy fire in solitude foment his care :
 The court is joyless, for thou art not there !
 No costly carpets raise his hoary head,
 No rich embroid'ry shines to grace his bed :
 Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the skies, 230
 Rank'd with his slaves, on earth the monarch lies ,
 Deep are his sighs, his visage pale, his dress
 The garb of woe and habit of distress.
 And when the autumn takes his annual round,
 The leafy honours scatt'ring on the ground ; 235
 Regardless of his years, abroad he lies,
 His bed the leaves, his canopy the skies.
 Thus cares on cares his painful days consume,
 And bow his age with sorrow to the tomb !
 For thee my son, I wept my life away ; 240
 For thee thro' hell's eternal dungeons stray :
 Nor came my fate by ling'ring pains and slow,
 Nor bent the silver-shafted queen her bow ;

v. 224. *And shares the banquet in superiour state, &c.* This passage is fully explained by Eustathius : he tells us, that it was an ancient custom to invite kings and legislators to all public feasts ; this was to do them honour : and the chief seat was always reserved for the chief magistrate. Without this observation, the lines are unintelligible. It is evident that the words are not spoken of sacrifices or feasts made to the gods, but social entertainments, for they are general, *πάντες καλέουσι*, "all the people of the realm invite Telemachus to their feasts." And this seems to have been a right due to the chief magistrate, for *ἀλεγύνειν* implies it, which word Eustathius explains by *ἐν λόγῳ ποιεῖσθαι* ; "such an honour as ought not to be neglected," or

Grac'd with such honours as become the great.

It gives a very happy image of those ages of the world, when we observe such an intercourse between the king and the subject : the idea of power carries no terror in it, but the ruler himself makes a part of the public joy.

No dire disease bereav'd me of my breath ;
 Thou, thou my son wert my disease and death ; 245
 Unkindly with my love my son conspir'd,
 For thee I liv'd, for absent thee expir'd.

Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,
 Thrice thro' my arms she slipt like empty wind,
 Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind. 250
 Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide
 Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs reply'd.

Fly'st thou, lov'd shade, while I thus fondly mourn ?
 Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn !
 Is it, ye pow'rs that smile at human harms ! 255
 Too great a bliss to weep within her arms ?

v. 248. *Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,
 Thrice thro' my arms —*]

This passage plainly shews that the vehicles of the departed were believed by the antients to be of an aerial substance, and retain nothing of corporeal grossness.

Virgil has borrowed these verses.

“ Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum ;

“ Ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,

“ Par levibus ventis, velucrique simillima somno.”

Scaliger gives the preference to the Roman poet, because he uses three verses, at a time when the word “ter” occurs in the description, whereas Homer concludes in little more than two lines. But this is not criticizing, but trifling ; and ascribing to an author what the author himself had no thought of. This puts me in mind of a story in Lucian, where a person of a strong imagination, thinking there was a mystery in *μῆνιν*, the first word in the Iliad, is introduced enquiring of Homer in the regions of the dead, why he placed it in the beginning of his poem ? he answers, Because it first came into his head. I doubt not but the number of the lines in this place in both poets was equally accidental ; Virgil adds nothing to the thought of Homer, though he uses more words.

v. 256. — *A bliss to weep within her arms.*] This is almost a literal translation ; the words in the Greek are, *τὴν ἀπλάμυσθαι γόοιο*, or “that we may delight ourselves with sorrow,” which Eustathius explains by saying, “there is a pleasure in weeping :” I should rather understand the words to signify, that in the instant while he is rejoicing at the sight of his mother, he is compelled to turn his joy into tears, to find the whole scene a delusion.

Or has hell's queen an empty image sent,
That wretched I might ev'n my joys lament ?

O son of woe, the pensive shade rejoin'd,
Oh most inur'd to grief of all mankind ! 260

'Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives :
All, all are such, when life the body leaves ;
No more the substance of the man remains,
Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins :
These the funereal flames in atoms bear, 265

To wander with the wind in empty air ;
While the impassive soul reluctant flies,
Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies.
But from the dark dominions speed thy way,
And climb the steep ascent to upper day ; 270
To thy chaste bride the wond'rous story tell,
The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.

Thus while she spoke, in swarms hell's empress brings
Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings ;
Thick, and more thick they gather round the blood, 275
Ghost throng'd on ghost (a dire assembly) stood !
Dauntless my sword I seize : the airy crew,
Swift as it flash'd along the gloom, withdrew ;
'Then shade to shade in mutual forms succeeds,
Her race recounts, and their illustrious deeds. 280

v. 279. *Then shade to shade — succeeds.*] Nothing can better shew the invention of Homer, than his capacity of furnishing out a scene of such great variety in this infernal region. He calls up the heroes of former ages from a state of inexistence to adorn and diversify his poetry. If it be asked what relation this journey into hell has to the main action of the *Odyssey* ? the answer is, It has an episodic affinity with it, and shews the sufferings of Ulysses more than any of his voyages upon the ocean, as it is more horrible and full of terrors. What a treasury of antient history and fables has he opened by this descent ? He lets us into a variety of different characters of the most famous personages recorded in antient story ; and at the same time lays before us a supplement to the *Iliad*. If Virgil paid a happy piece of flattery to the Romans, by introducing the greatest persons of the best families in Rome, in his descent in the *Æneid* ; Homer no less happily interests the Grecians

Tyro began : whom great Salmoneus bred ;
 The royal partner of fam'd Cretheus' bed.
 For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns
 He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns ;

in his story, by honouring the ancestors of the noblest families who still flourished in Greece, in the *Odyssey* ; a circumstance that could not fail of being very acceptable to a Grecian or Roman reader, but perhaps less entertaining to us, who have no particular interest in these stories.

v. 281. *Tyro — whom great Salmoneus bred.*] Virgil gives a very different character of Salmoneus from this of Homer : he describes him as an impious person who presumed to imitate the thunder of Jupiter, whereas Homer files him blameless, or ἀμύμων ; an argument, says Eustathius, that the preceding story is a fable invented since the days of Homer. This may perhaps be true, and we may naturally conclude it to be true from his silence of it, but not from the epithet ἀμύμων ; for in the first book of the *Odyssey*, Jupiter gives the same appellation to Ægythus, even while he condemns him of murder and adultery. Eustathius adds, that Salmoneus was a great proficient in mechanics, and inventor of a vessel called βροντήιον, which imitated thunder by rolling stones in it, which gave occasion to the fictions of the poets.

v. 283. *For fair Enipeus. as from fruitful urns
 He pours his wat'ry store, the virgin burns.]*

There are no fables in the poets that seem more bold than these concerning the commerce between women and river gods ; but Eustathius gives us a probable solution : I will translate him literally. It was customary for young virgins to resort frequently to rivers to bathe in them ; and the ancients have very well explained these fables about the intercourse between them and the water gods : " Receive my virginity, O Scamander !" says a lady ; but it is very apparent who this Scamander was : her lover Cimon lay concealed in the reeds. This was a good excuse for female frailty, in ages of credulity ; for such imaginary intercourse between the fair sex and deities was not only believed, but esteemed honourable. No doubt the ladies were frequently deceived ; their lovers personated the deities, and they took a Cimon to their arms in the disguise of a Scamander.

It is uncertain where this Enipeus flows : Strabo (says Eustathius) imagines it to be a river of Peloponnesus, that disembogues its waters into the Alphæus ; for the Thessalian river is Eniseus, and not Enipeus : this rises from mount Othrys, and receives into it the Epidanrus. The former seems to be the river intended by Homer, for it takes its source from a village called Salmone ; and

Smooth flows the gentle stream with wanton pride, 285
 And in soft mazes rolls a silver tide.
 As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,
 The monarch of the deep beholds and loves;
 In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms,
 The am'rous god descends into her arms: 290
 Around, a spacious arch of waves he throws,
 And high in air the liquid mountain rose;
 Thus in surrounding floods conceal'd he proves
 The pleasing transport, and compleats his loves.
 Then softly sighing, he the fair address, 295
 And as he spoke her tender hand he prest.
 Hail happy nymph! no vulgar births are ow'd
 To the prolific raptures of a god:
 Lo! when nine times the moon renews her horn,
 Two brother heroes shall from thee be born; 300
 Thy early care the future worthies claim,
 To point them to the arduous paths of fame;
 But in thy breast th' important truth conceal,
 Nor dare the secret of a god reveal:
 For know, thou Neptune view'ft! and at my nod 305
 Earth trembles, and the waves confess their god.
 He added not, but mounting spurn'd the plain,
 Then plung'd into the chambers of the main.
 Now in the time's full process forth she brings
 Jove's dread vicegerents, in two future kings; 310
 O'er proud Iolcos Pelias stretch'd his reign,
 And god-like Neleus rul'd the Pylian plain:
 Then fruitful, to her Cretheus' royal bed
 She gallant Pheres and fam'd Æson bred:
 From the same fountain Amythaon rose, 315
 Pleas'd with the din of war, and noble shout of foes.

what strengthens this conjecture is the neighbourhood of the ocean
 (or Neptune in this fable) to that river. Lucian has made this story
 of Enipeus the subject of one of his dialogues,

There mov'd Antiope with haughty charms,
 Who blest th' almighty Thund'rer in her arms :
 Hence sprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,
 Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name ; 320
 Tho' bold in open field, they yet surround
 The town with walls, and mound inject on mound ;
 Here ramparts stood, there tow'rs rose high in air,
 And there thro' sev'n wide portals rush'd the war.

There with soft step the fair Alcmena trod, 325
 Who bore Alcides to the thund'ring god ;

v. 319. *Hence sprung Amphion* —] The fable of Thebes built by the power of music is not mentioned by Homer, and therefore may be supposed to be of later invention. Homer relates many circumstances in these short histories differently from his successors ; Epicaſte is called Jocasta, and the tragedians have entirely varied the story of Oedipus : they tell us he tore out his eyes, that he was driven from Thebes, and being conducted by his daughter Antigone, arrived at Athens, where entering the temple of the furies, he died in the midst of a furious storm, and was carried by it into hell : whereas Homer directly affirms, that he continued to reign in Thebes after all his calamities.

It is not easy to give a reason why the mother, and not the father, is said to send the furies to torment Oedipus, especially because he was the murderer of his father Laius : Eustathius answers, that it was by accident that he slew Laius ; but upon the discovery of his wickedness in marrying his mother Jocasta, he used her with more barbarity and rigour than was necessary, and therefore she pursues him with her vengeance. Jocasta and Dido both die after the same manner by their own hands : I agree with Scaliger, that Virgil has described hanging more happily than Homer.

“ Informis Lethi nodum trabe necit ab altâ.”

‘Αφαιμένη βρογχον αἰπὺν ἀφ’ ὑψηλοῦ μελάθρη.

There is nothing like the “ Informis Lethi nodus” in Homer : and as that critic observes, “ tam atrox res aliquo verborum ambitu “ studiosus comprehendenda fuit.” The story of Oedipus is this : Laius being informed by the oracle, that he should be slain by his son, caused Oedipus immediately to be exposed by his shepherds to wild beasts ; but the shepherds preserved him, and gave him education : when he came to years of maturity he went towards Thebes in search of his father, but meeting Laius by the way, and a quarrel arising, he slew him ignorantly, and married Jocasta his mother. This is the subject of two tragedies in Sophocles.

And Megara, who charm'd the son of Jove,
And soften'd his stern soul to tender love.

Sullen and sour with discontented mien
Jocasta frown'd, th' incestuous Theban queen; 330
With her own son she join'd in nuptial bands,
Tho' father's blood imbru'd his murd'rous hands:
The gods and men the dire offence detest,
The gods with all their furies rend his breast:
In lofty Thebes he wore th' imperial crown, 335
A pompous wretch! accurs'd upon a throne.
The wife self-murder'd from a beam depends,
And her foul soul to blackest hell descends;
Thence to her son the choicest plagues she brings,
And the fiends haunt him with a thousand stings. 340

And now the beauteous Chloris I descry,
A lovely shade, Amphion's youngest joy!
With gifts unnumber'd Neleus fought her arms,
Nor paid too dearly for unequall'd charms;
Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great, 345
He sway'd the scepter with imperial state.
Three gallant sons the joyful monarch told,
Sage Nestor, Periclimenus the bold,

v. 341. — — *The beauteous Chloris I descry.*] A critic ought not only to endeavour to point out the beauties in the sense, but also in the versification of a poet: Dionysius Halicarnassus cites these two verses as peculiarly flowing and harmonious.

Καὶ Χλωρίν εἶδον περικαλλέα, τὴν παῖς Νηλεΐδης.
Γῆμεν εὖν διὰ κάλλος, ἐπεὶ σέρε μύρια ἴνδα.

There is not one elision, nor one rough vowel or consonant, but they flow along with the utmost smoothness, and the beauty of the muse equals that of Chloris.

v. 345. *Great in Orchomenos* — —] This is a very considerable city lying between Bœotia and Phœcis, upon the river Cephissus: Homer calls it the Minyan Orchomenos, because the Minyans an ancient people inhabited it: it was the colony of these Minyans that sailed to Iolcos, and gave name to the Argonauts. Eustathius.

v. 348. — — *Periclimenus the bold.*] The reason why Homer gives this epithet to Periclemenus may be learned from Hesiod:

And Chromius last ; but of the softer race,
 One nymph alone, a miracle of grace. 350
 Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn,
 The fire denies, and kings rejected mourn.
 To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,
 Whose arm should ravish from Phylacian fields
 The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong ; 355
 Wild, furious herds, unconquerably strong !
 This dares a seer, but nought the seer prevails,
 In beauty's cause illustriously he fails ;

Neptune gave him the power to change himself into all shapes, but he was slain by Hercules : Periclemenus assaulted that hero in the shape of a bee, or fly, who discovering him in that disguise, by the means of Pallas slew him with his club. This is the person of whom Ovid speaks, but adds that he was slain in the shape of an eagle by Hercules.

“ Mira Pirielimeni mors est, cui posse figuras

“ Sumere quas vellet, rursusque reponere sumptas,

“ Neptunus dederat,” &c.

Euphorion speaks of him in the shape of a bee or fly.

— “ Ἀλλοίς δ' αὖτε μελισσῶν ἀγλαὰ φύλα

“ Ἀλλοίε δεινὸς Ὀφίς —

v. 357. *This dares a seer, &c.*] This story is related with great obscurity, but we learn from the xvth book that the name of this prophet was Melampus. Iphyclus was the son of Deioneus, and uncle to Tyro ; he had seized upon the goods of Tyro the mother of Neleus, among which were many beautiful oxen : these Neleus demands, but is unjustly denied by Iphyclus : Neleus had a daughter named Pero, a great beauty, who was courted by all the neighbouring princes, but the father refuses her unless to the man who recovers these oxen from Iphyclus : Bias was in love with Pero, and persuades his brother Melampus a prophet to undertake the recovery ; he attempts it, but being vanquished, is thrown into prison ; but at last set at liberty, for telling Iphyclus, who was childless, how to procure issue. Iphyclus upon this gave him the oxen for a reward.

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the explanation of this story in Eustathius, which I will lay before the reader for his entertainment. Melampus, after he was made a prisoner, was trusted to the care of a man and a woman ; the man used him with mercy, and the woman with cruelty : one day he heard a low noise, and a family of worms in conference. (He understood the language

Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains
 In painful dungeons, and coercive chains ; 360
 The foe at last, from durance where he lay,
 His art revering, gave him back to day ;
 Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfill
 The steadfast purpose of th' almighty will.

With graceful port advancing now I spy'd 365
 Leda the fair, the god-like Tyndar's bride :
 Hence Pollux sprung who wields with furious sway
 The deathful gauntlet, matchless in the fray :
 And Castor glorious on th' embattled plain
 Curbs the proud steed, reluctant to the rein : 370
 By turns they visit this ætherial sky,
 And live alternate, and alternate die :

of all the animal creation, beasts and reptiles.) These worms were discoursing how they had eaten through a great beam that lay over the head of Melampus : he immediately provides for his own safety, feigns a sickness, and begs to be carried into the fresh air : the woman and the man immediately comply with this request ; at which instant the beam falling, kills the woman : an account of this is forthwith carried to Iphyclus, who sending for Melampus, asks who he is ? He tells him, a prophet, and that he came for the oxen of Neleus : Iphyclus commands him to declare how he may have an heir ? Melampus kills an ox, and calls all the birds of the air to feast on it ; they all appear except the vulture ; he proposes the case to them, but they give no satisfactory answer ; at last the vulture appears, and gives Melampus a full information : upon this Iphyclus obtains a child, and Melampus the oxen of Neleus.

v. 364. *The steadfast purpose of th' almighty will.*] These words διός ἐτελείετο βελλή, seem to come in without any connexion with the story, and consequently unnecessarily ; but Homer speaks of it concisely, as an adventure well known in his times, and therefore not wanting a further explication : but Apollodorus relates the whole at large, lib. i. The reason why these words are inserted is, to inform us that there were antient prophecies concerning Iphyclus, that it was decreed by Jupiter he should have no children till he had recourse to a prophet, who explaining these prophecies to him, should shew him how to obtain that blessing : in this sense the will of Jupiter may be said to be fulfilled.

v. 372. *And live alternate, and alternate die.*] Castor and Pollux are called Διόσκηροι, or the "sons of Jupiter ;" but what could give occasion to this fiction, of their living and dying alternately ? Eustathius informs us that it is a physical allegory : they represent

In hell beneath, on earth, in heav'n above
Reign the twin-gods, the fav'rite sons of Jove.

There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain, 375
Who charm'd the monarch of the boundless main;
Hence Ephialtes, hence stern Otus sprung,
More fierce than giants, more than giants strong;
The earth o'erburthen'd groan'd beneath their weight,
None but Orion e'er surpass'd their height: 380
The wond'rous youths had scarce nine winters told,
When high in air, tremendous to behold,
Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head,
And full nine cubits broad their shoulders spread.

the two hemispheres of the world; the one of which is continually enlightened by the sun, and consequently the other is then in darkness: and these being successively illuminated according to the order of the day and night, one of these sons of Jupiter may be said to revive when one part of the world rises into day, and the other to die, when it descends into darkness. What makes this allegory the more probable is, that Jupiter denotes, in many allegories of Homer, the air, or the upper regions of it.

v. 383. *Nine ells aloft they rear'd their tow'ring head.*] This is undoubtedly a very bold fiction, and has been censured by some critics as monstrous, and praised by others as sublime. It may seem utterly incredible that any human creatures could be nine ells, that is, eleven yards and a quarter in height, at the age of nine years. But it may vindicate Homer as a poet to say that he only made use of a fable, that had been transmitted down from the earliest times of the world; for so early the war between the gods and giants was supposed to be. There might a rational account be given of these apparent incredibilities; if I might be allowed to say what many authors of great name have conjectured, that these stories are only traditional, and all founded upon the ejection of the fallen angels from heaven, and the wars they had with the good angels to regain their stations. If this might be allowed, we shall then have real giants, who endeavoured to take heaven by assault; then nothing can be invented by a poet so boldly, as to exceed what may justly be believed of these beings: then the stories of heaping mountain upon mountain will come within the bounds of credibility. But without having recourse to this solution, Longinus brings this passage as an instance of true sublimity, chap. vi. He is proving that the sublime is sometimes found without the pathetic, for some passions are mean, as fear, sadness, sorrow, and consequently incapable of sublimity;

Proud of their strength and more than mortal size, 385
 The gods they challenge, and affect the skies;
 Heav'd on Olympus tott'ring Ossa stood;
 On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood:

and on the other hand, there are many things great and sublime, in which there is no passion; of this kind is what Homer says concerning Otus and Ephialtes, with so much boldness.

The gods they challenge, and affect the skies.

And what he adds concerning the success of these giants is still bolder.

Had they to manhood grown, the bright abodes
 Of heav'n had shook, and gods been heap'd on gods.

Virgil was of the opinion of Longinus, for he has imitated Homer.

"Hic & Aloidas geminos immania vidi

"Corpora, qui manibus magnum rescindere cælum

"Aggressi, superisque Jovem detrudere regnis."

Macrobius, lib. v. Saturn. cap. xiii. judges these verses to be inferior to Homer's in majesty; in Homer we have the height and breadth of these giants, and he happily paints the very size of their limbs in the run of his poetry; two words, *ἐνέατοι*, and *ἐννεαήμεροι*, almost make one verse, designedly chosen to express their bulk in the turn of the words; but Virgil says only "immania corpora," and makes no addition concerning the giants, omitting intirely the circumstance of their size: Homer relates the piling hill upon hill; Virgil barely adds, that they endeavoured to storm the heavens.

Scaliger is firm and faithful to Virgil, and vindicates his favourite in the true spirit of criticism. I persuade myself he glances at Macrobius, for he cavils at those instances which he produces as beauties in Homer; I give his answer in his own words. "Admirantur Græculi pueriles mensuras; nimis sæpe cogor exclamare, aliud esse Græculum circulatorem, aliud regiae orationis authorem: indignam censuit suâ majestate Virgilius hanc minutam superstitionem, &c."

Eustathius remarks that the ancients greatly admired the exact proportion of these giants, for the body is of a due symmetry, when the thickness is three degrees less than the height of it. According to this account the giants grew one cubit every year in bulk, and three in height. Homer says, that they fell by the shafts of Apollo, that is, they died suddenly; but other writers relate, that as they were hunting, Diana sent a stag between them, at which both at once aiming their weapons, and she withdrawing the stag, they fell by their own darts. Eustathius,

Such were they youths! had they to manhood grown,
Almighty Jove had trembled on his throne. 390

But ere the harvest of the beard began
To bristle on the chin, and promise man,
His shafts Apollo aim'd; at once they sound,
And stretch the giant-monsters o'er the ground.

There mournful Phædra with sad Procris moves, 395
Both beauteous shades, both hapless in their loves;
And near them walk'd, with solemn pace and flow,
Sad Ariadne, partner of their woe;
The royal Minos Ariadne bred,
She Theseus lov'd; from Crete with Theseus fled;
Swift to the Dian isle the hero flies, 401
And tow'rd's his Athens bears the lovely prize;

v. 387. — *On Olympus tot'ring Ossa stood, &c.*] Strabo takes notice of the judgment of Homer, in placing the mountains in this order; they all stand in Macedonia; Olympus is the largest, and therefore he makes it the basis upon which Ossa stands, that being the next to Olympus in magnitude, and Pelion being the least is placed above Ossa, and thus they rise pyramidically. Virgil follows a different regulation;

“ Ter sunt conati imponere Pelion Ossæ

“ Scilicet atque Ossæ frondosum imponere Olympum.”

Here the largest mountain is placed uppermost, not so naturally as in the order of Homer. There is a peculiar beauty in the former of these verses, in which Virgil makes the two vowels in “conati imponere” meet without an elision, to express the labour and straining of the giants in heaving mountain upon mountain. I appeal to the ear of every reader, if he can pronounce these two words without a pause and stop; the difficulty in the flow of the verse excellently represents the labour of the giants straining to shove Pelion upon Ossa. Dacier remarks that Virgil follows the situation of the mountains, without regarding the magnitude; thus Pelion lies first on the north of Macedonia, Ossa is the second, and the third Olympus; but she prefers Homer's method as most rational.

v. 402. *And tow'rd's his Athens bears the lovely prize.*] Homer justifies Theseus from any crime with relation to Ariadne, he is guilty of no infidelity as succeeding poets affirm; she died suddenly in Dia, or Naxos (an island lying between Thera and Crete;) Diana slew her at the instigation of Bacchus, who accused her to that goddess, for profaning her temple by too free an intercourse

There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,
The goddess aims her shaft, the nymph expires.

There Clymenè and Mera I behold, 405 }
There Eriphylè weeps, who loosely fold
Her lord, her honour, for the lust of gold.
But should I all recount, the night would fail,
Unequal to the melancholy tale:

And all-composing rest my nature craves, 410
Here in the court, or yonder on the waves;
In you I trust, and in the heav'nly pow'rs,
To land Ulysses on his natives shores.

He ceas'd: but left so charming on their ear
His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear. 415

with Theseus; this Homer calls *μαρτυρίη Διονύσου*. Clymene was a daughter of Mynias, Mæra of Prætus and Antæa, who having made a vow to Diana of perpetual virginity, broke it; and therefore fell by that goddess; Phædra was wife to Theseus, and fell in love with her son Hippolytus. Eriphyle was the daughter of Talæus and Lysimache, wife of the prophet Amphiaraus; who being bribed with a collar of gold by Polynices, obliged her husband to go to the war of Thebes, though she knew he was decreed to fall before that city: she was slain by her son Alcmaeon, Eustathius.

Ulysses when he concludes, says it is time to repose,

Here in the court, or yonder on the waves.

To understand this the reader must remember, that in the beginning of the eighth book all things were prepared for his immediate voyage, or as it is there expressed,

————— Ev'n now the gales

Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails.

So that he desires to repose in the ship, that he may begin his voyage early in the morning.

v. 414. *He ceas'd; but left so charming on their ear
His voice —————]*

I cannot tell whether this pause, or break in the narration of Ulysses, has a good effect or not; whether it gives a relief to the reader, or is an unexpected disappointment of the pursuit of the story? But certainly what is inserted during this short interruption, is particularly well chosen; it unites the episode with the main action, and shews how it contributes to the end of the Ody-

'Till rising up, Aretè silence broke,
Stretch'd out her snowy hand, and thus she spoke:

What wond'rous man heav'n sends us in our guest!

Thro' all his woes the hero shines confest;

His comely port, his ample frame express 420

A manly air, majestic in distress.

He, as my guest, is my peculiar care,

You share the pleasure,—then in bounty share;

To worth in misery a rev'rence pay,

And with a gen'rous hand reward his stay; 425

For since kind heav'n with wealth our realm has blest,

Give it to heav'n, by aiding the distress.

Then sage Echeneus, whose grave, rev'rend brow

The hand of time had silver'd o'er with snow,

sey, in influencing the Phæacians not only to restore Ulysses, but restore him with wealth and honour, which is the aim of the whole poem.

v. 416. ——— *Aretè silence broke.*] Eustathius observes, that the two motives which the queen uses to move the Phæacians to liberality, is the relation Ulysses has to her, as her peculiar guest (for Nausicaa first recommended him to the queen's protection) and their own wealth: (for so he renders ἐναρ^{ος} δ' ἐμμορε τιμῆς, and Dacier follows his interpretation) I have adventured to translate it differently, in this sense: "It is true, he is my peculiar guest, but you all share in the honour he does us, and therefore "it is equitable to join in his assistance:" then she closes her speech with reminding them of her abilities; which in the other sense would be tautology.

v. 425. ——— *with a gen'rous hand reward his stay.*] This I am persuaded is the true meaning of the passage; Ulysses had shewed a desire immediately to go aboard, and the queen draws an argument from this to induce the Phæacians to a greater contribution, and Ulysses to a longer stay; she persuades them to take time to prepare their presents, which must occasion the stay of Ulysses till they are prepared. They might otherwise (observes Dacier) have pretended to comply with the impatience of Ulysses, and immediately dismissed him with a small gratuity, under the pretext of not having time to prepare a greater. It must be confessed, to the reproach of human nature, that this is but too just a picture of it: self-interest makes the great very ready to gratify their petitioners with a dismissal, or to comply with them to their disadvantage.

Mature in wisdom rose: Your words, he cries, 430
Demand obedience, for your words are wise.

But let our king direct the glorious way
To gen'rous acts; our part is to obey.

While life informs these limbs (the king reply'd)
Well to deserve, be all my cares employ'd: 435

But here this night the royal guest detain,
'Till the sun flames along th' ætherial plain:

Be it my task to send with ample stores

The stranger from our hospitable shores:

Tread you my steps! 'Tis mine to lead the race, 440

The first in glory, as the first in place.

To whom the prince: This night with joy I stay,
O monarch great in virtue as in sway!

If thou the circling year my stay controul,

To raise a bounty noble as thy soul; 445

The circling year I wait, with ampler stores

And fitter pomp to hail my native shores:

Then by my realms due homage would be paid;

For wealthy kings are loyally obey'd!

v. 444. *If thou the circling year, &c.*] This speech of Ulysses has been condemned by the critics, as avaritious; and therefore Eustathius judges it to be spoken artfully and complimentally; Didymus, with a well-bred urbanity, or *χαρίεντως*: I see nothing mean in it; what Ulysses speaks proceeds from the gratitude of his soul; the heart of a brave man is apt to overflow while it acknowledges an obligation. Spondanus imagines that Ulysses may possibly speak jocosely, and asks if it is probable that he could be induced to stay from his country out of a mean consideration of a few presents, who had already preferred it to immortality? But in truth, Ulysses never behaves with levity; and it would give us an ill idea of that hero, should he return the united kindness of the peers of Phæacia with scorn and derision: besides, Ulysses values these presents no otherwise than as they may contribute to his re-establishment in his country; for he directly says,

So by my realms due homage shall be paid,

A wealthy prince is loyally obey'd.

This is an evidence, that the words of Ulysses flow not from so base a fountain as avarice, but that all his thoughts and actions center upon his country.

O king! for such thou art, and sure thy blood 450
 Thro' veins (he cry'd) of royal fathers flow'd;
 Unlike those vagrants who on falshood live,
 Skill'd in smooth tales, and artful to deceive;
 Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
 Wife is thy voice, and noble is thy heart. 455
 Thy words like music ev'ry breast controul,
 Steal thro' the ear, and win upon the soul;
 Soft, as some song divine, thy story flows,
 Nor better could the muse record thy woes.

But say, upon the dark and dismal coast, 460
 Saw'st thou the worthies of the Grecian host?
 The god-like leaders who in battle slain,
 Fell before Troy, and nobly prest the plain?
 And lo! a length of night behind remains,
 The ev'ning stars still mount th' ætherial plains. 465

v. 454. *Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
 Wife is thy voice ————]*

This is an instance of the judgment of Homer in sustaining his characters. The Phæacians were at first described as a credulous people, and he gives us here an instance of their credulity, for they swallow all these fables as so many realities. The verse in the original is remarkable.

Σοὶ δ' ἐπὶ μὲν μορφῇ ἐπέων ἐπὶ δὲ φρενὲς ἰσθλαί.

Which Eustathius thinks was used by Alcinous, to tell Ulysses that his fables were so well laid together as to have the appearance of truth; Dacier follows him; and (as usual) delivers his opinion as her own sentiment. But this cannot be Homer's intention, for it supposes Alcinous to look upon these relations as fables, contrary to the universal character of their ignorant credulity; I therefore am persuaded that *μορφῇ ἐπέων* signifies the pleasantness or beauty of his relation, and *φρενὲς ἰσθλαί* the integrity of his heart, in opposition to the character of a liar, or perhaps his wisdom in general: and this excellently agrees with his resembling him to a musician, (who always was a poet in those ages, and sang the exploits of heroes, &c. to the lyre.) In this view the sweetness of the music represents the agreeableness of the narration, and the subject of the musician's song the story of his adventures.

Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell,
 Thy woes on earth, the wond'rous scenes in hell,
 'Till in the vault of heav'n the stars decay,
 And the sky reddens with the rising day.

O worthy of the pow'r the gods assign'd, 470
 (Ulysses thus replies) a king in mind!
 Since yet the early hour of night allows
 Time for discourse, and time for soft repose,
 If scenes of misery can entertain,
 Woes I unfold, of woes a dismal train. 475
 Prepare to hear of murder and of blood;
 Of god-like heroes who uninjur'd stood
 Amidst a war of spears in foreign lands,
 Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.

Now summon'd Proserpine to hell's black hall 480
 The heroine shades; they vanish'd at her call;

When lo! advanc'd the forms of heroes slain
 By stern Ægythus, a majestic train, }
 And high above the rest, Atrides prest the plain.
 He quaff'd the gore: and straight his soldier knew,
 And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew; 486
 His arms he stretch'd; his arms the touch deceive,
 Nor in the fond embrace, embraces give:
 His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd,
 Now all Atrides is an empty shade. 490

Mov'd at the sight, I for a space resign'd
 To soft affliction all my manly mind;
 At last with tears—O what relentless doom,
 Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb?
 Say while the sea, and while the tempest raves, 495
 Has fate oppress'd thee in the roaring waves,
 Or nobly seiz'd thee in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms?

The ghost returns: O chief of human kind
 For active courage and a patient mind; 500

Nor while the sea, nor while the tempest raves,
Has fate oppress'd me on the roaring waves!
Nor nobly seiz'd me in the dire alarms,
Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms.
Stab'd by a murd'rous hand Atrides dy'd, 505
A foul adult'rer, and a faithless bride;
Ev'n in my mirth and at the friendly feast,
O'er the full bowl, the traitor stab'd his guest;
Thus by the gory arm of slaughter falls
The stately ox, and bleeds within the stalls. 510
But not with me the direful murder ends,
These, these expir'd! their crime, they were my friends:
Thick as the boars, which some luxurious lord
Kills for the feast, to crown the nuptial board.
When war has thunder'd with its loudest storms, 515
Death thou hast seen in all her ghastly forms;
In duel met her, on the lifted ground,
When hand to hand they wound return for wound;
But never have thy eyes astonish'd view'd
So vile a deed, so dire a scene of blood. 520
Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
Glow's in our veins, and opens ev'ry soul,
We groan, we faint; with blood the dome is dy'd,
And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide——
Her breast all gore, with lamentable cries, 525
The bleeding innocent Cassandra dies!
Then tho' pale death froze cold in ev'ry vein,
My sword I strive to wield, but strive in vain;
Nor did my trait'refs wife these eye-lids close,
Or decently in death my limbs compose. 530
O woman, woman, when to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend:
And such was mine! who basely plung'd her sword
Thro' the fond bosom where she reign'd ador'd!
Alas! I hop'd, the toils of war o'ercome, 535
To meet soft quiet and repose at home;

Delusive hope! O wife, thy deeds disgrace
 The perjurd sex, and blacken all the race;
 And should posterity one virtuous find,
 Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind. 540

v. 539. *And should posterity one virtuous find,
 Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind.]*

There cannot be a greater satyr upon the fair sex than this whole conference between Ulysses and Agamemnon. Terence has fallen into the sentiment with Homer.

“Ædepol, næ nos æquè sumus omnes invisæ viris
 “Propter paucas, quæ omnes faciunt dignæ ut videamur
 “malo.”

But how is this to be reconciled to justice, and why should the innocent suffer for the crimes of the guilty? We are to take notice, that Agamemnon speaks with anger, an undistinguishing passion, and his words flow from resentment, not reason; it must be confessed that Agamemnon had received great provocation, his wife had dishonoured his bed, and taken his life away; it is therefore no wonder if he flies out into a vehemence of language; a poet is obliged to follow nature, and give a fierceness to the features, when he paints a person in such emotions, and add a violence to his colours.

It has been objected that Homer, and even Virgil, were enemies to the fairest part of the creation; that there is scarce a good character of a woman in either of the poets: but Andromache in the Iliad, and Penelope, Arete, and Nausicaa in the Odyssey, are instances to the contrary. I must own I am a little at a loss to vindicate Ulysses in this place; he is speaking before Arete and Nausicaa, a queen and her daughter, and entertains them with a satyr upon their own sex, which may appear unpolite, and a want of decency, and be applied by Alcinous, as a caution to beware of his spouse, and not to trust her in matters of importance with his secrets; for this is the moral that is naturally drawn from the fable. Madam Dacier gives up the cause, and allows the advice of not trusting women to be good; it comes from her indeed a little unwillingly, with “I will not say but the counsel may be right.” I for my part will allow Ulysses to be in an hundred faults, rather than lay such an imputation upon the ladies; Ulysses ought to be considered as having suffered twenty years calamities for that sex in the cause of Helen, and this possibly may give a little acrimony to his language. He puts it indeed in the mouth of Agamemnon; but the objection returns, why does he chuse to relate such a story before a queen and her daughter? In short, I think they ought to have torn him to pieces, as the ladies of Thrace served Orpheus.

O injur'd shade, I cry'd, what mighty woes
To thy imperial race from woman rose!
By woman here thou tread'st this mournful strand,
And Greece by woman lies a desert land.

Warn'd by my ills beware, the shade replies, 545
Nor trust the sex that is so rarely wise;
When earnest to explore thy secret breast,
Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest.
But in thy consort cease to fear a foe,
For thee she feels sincerity of woe: 550
When Troy first bled beneath the Grecian arms
She shone unrival'd with a blaze of charms,
Thy infant son her fragrant bosom prest,
Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breast;
But now the years a num'rous train have ran; 555
The blooming boy is ripen'd into man;
Thy eyes shall see him burn with noble fire,
The fire shall bless his son, the son his sire:
But my Orestes never met these eyes,
Without one look the murder'd father dies; 560
Then from a wretched friend this wisdom learn,
Ev'n to thy queen disguis'd, unknown, return;
For since of womankind so few are just,
Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

But say, resides my son in royal port, 565
In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court?

v. 541. ———— *what mighty woes*
To thy imperial race from women rose!]

Ulysses here means Aëropè the wife of Atreus, and mother of Agamemnon, who being corrupted by Thyestes, involved the whole family in the utmost calamities. Eustathius.

v. 565. *But say, resides my son* ————] Eustathius gives us the reason why Agamemnon mentions Pyle, Sparta, and Orchomenos, as places where Orestes might make his residence: Sparta was under the dominion of his brother Menelaus; Pyle of his old friend and faithful counsellor Nestor; and Orchomenos was a city of great strength, and therefore of great security. We may evidently

Or say in Pyle? for yet he views the light,
Nor glides a phantom thro' the realms of night.

Then I: Thy suit is vain, nor can I say
If yet he breathes in realms of chearful day; 570
Or pale or wan beholds these nether skies?
Truth I revere: for wisdom never lies.

Thus in a tide of tears our sorrows flow,
And add new horror to the realms of woe;
'Till side by side along the dreary coast 575
Advanc'd Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost,
A friendly pair! near these the * Pylian stray'd,
And tow'ring Ajax, an illustrious shade!
War was his joy, and pleas'd with loud alarms,
None but Pelides brighter shone in arms. 580

Thro' the thick gloom his friend Achilles knew,
And as he speaks the tears descend in dew.

Com'st thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds;
Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread, 585
Throng'd with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead?

gather from this passage what notion the antients had concerning a future state: namely, that persons after death were intirely strangers to the affairs of this world; for Orestes his son had slain his murderer Ægythus, and reigned in peaceable possession of his dominions, when Agamemnon is ignorant of the whole transaction, and desires Ulysses to give him information.

v. 576. ——— *Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost.*] Homer lets no opportunity pass of celebrating his hero Achilles, he cannot fail of awakening our attention to hear the story of this great man after death, of whom alive we saw such wonders. Besides, the poet pays an honour to true friendship: the person whom Achilles best loved on earth, is his chief companion in the other world: a very strong argument to cultivate friendship with sincerity. Achilles here literally fulfils what he promised in the Iliad.

If in the melancholy shades below
The flames of friends, and lovers cease to glow,
Yet mine shall sacred last; mine undecay'd
Burn on thro' death, and animate my shade,

* Antiloehus.

To whom with sighs : I pass these dreadful gates
 To seek the Theban, and consult the fates :
 For still distress I rove from coast to coast,
 Lost to my friends, and to my country lost. 590

But sure the eye of time beholds no name
 So blest as thine in all the rolls of fame ;
 Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
 And dead, thou rul'st a king in these abodes.

Talk not of ruling in this dol'rous gloom, 595
 Nor think vain words (he cry'd) can ease my doom.

Rather I chuse laboriously to bear
 A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
 A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread ;
 Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead. 600

v. 599. *A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread ;
 Than reign the scepter'd monarch of the dead.*]

Nothing sure can give us a more disadvantageous image of a future state, than this speech which Homer puts into the mouth of so great a hero as Achilles. If the poet intended to shew the vanity of that destructive glory which is purchased by the sword, and read a lecture to all the disturbers of mankind, whom we absurdly honour as heroes, it must be allowed he has done it effectually : if this was not his design, the remark of Plato, 3 Repub. is not without a foundation ; he there proscribes this whole passage as dangerous to morals, and blames the poet for making Achilles say he prefers misery and servitude to all the honours which the dead are capable of enjoying. For what, says he, can make death more terrible to young persons ? And will it not dispose them to suffer all calamities to avoid it, deter them from exposing themselves to danger, even in defence of their country, and teach them to be cowards and slaves ? Lucian was of Plato's opinion, for he mentions this passage, and ridicules it in his Dialogues. Dacier gives a different turn to it, and endeavours to shew that there is no danger of such consequences as Plato draws from it. " Achilles, adds she, speaks directly contrary to " his declared sentiments and actions, and therefore there is no " danger he should persuade mankind to prefer servitude before " death, when he himself died, rather than not revenge his friend " Patroclus. Such words which are contradicted both by the " sentiments and actions of him that speaks, have on the con- " trary a very good effect." But I cannot come into her opinion ; I will let Achilles answer for himself out of Lucian ; " In the " other world I was ignorant, says he, of the state of the dead,

But say, if in my steps my son proceeds,
 And emulates his god-like father's deeds?
 If at the clash of arms, and shout of foes,
 Swells his bold heart, his bosom nobly glows?
 Say if my fire, the rev'rend Peleus reigns 605
 Great in his Pthia, and his throne maintains;
 Or weak and old, my youthful arm demands,
 To fix the scepter steadfast in his hands?
 O might the lamp of life rekindled burn,
 And death release me from the silent urn! 610
 This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,
 And swell'd the ground with mountains of the slain,
 Should vindicate my injur'd father's fame,
 Crush the proud rebel, and assert his claim.
 Illustrious shade, (I cry'd) of Peleus' fates 615
 No circumstance the voice of fame relates:
 But hear with pleas'd attention the renown,
 The wars and wisdom of thy gallant son:
 With me from Scyros to the field of fame
 Radiant in arms the blooming hero came. 620
 When Greece assembled all her hundred states
 To ripen counsels, and decide debates;
 Heav'ns! how he charm'd us with a flow of sense,
 And won the heart with manly eloquence!
 He first was seen of all the peers to rise, 625
 The third in wisdom where they all were wise;

"I had not experienced the difference between the two states,
 "when I preferred a little empty glory to life." This is an answer to what Dacier advances, for Achilles speaks with experience, and yet prefers misery and life before glory and death. I know not how to vindicate Homer, unless it be a vindication to say, that he wrote according to the opinions that antiently prevailed in the world; or that like Hercules, while the vehicle of Achilles is in this state of horror, his soul may be in heaven; especially since he received divine honours after his death, as well as Hercules. Tull. Nat. Deor. 3. "Aistypalæa Achillem sanctissimè co-
 "lit, qui si deus est, & Orpheus, &c."

v. 626. *The third in wisdom* ———] I have not ventured to render the Greek literally; Ulysses says that Neoptolemus was so

But when to try the fortune of the day,
 Host mov'd tow'rd host in terrible array,
 Before the van, impatient for the fight,
 With martial port he strode, and stern delight; 630
 Heaps strew'd on heaps beneath his falchion groan'd,
 And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.
 The time would fail should I in order tell
 What foes were vanquish'd, and what numbers fell:
 How, lost thro' love, Eurypylus was slain, 635
 And round him bled his bold Cetæan train.

wife, that only he himself and Nestor were wiser; a truth that would appear more graceful, if spoken by any other person than Ulysses. But perhaps the poet puts these words into his mouth, only because he is speaking to the Phæacians, who loved themselves to boast, and were full of vain-glory; and consequently they could not think self-praise a crime in Ulysses; on the contrary, it could not fail of having a very good effect, as it sets him off as a person of consummate wisdom.

The poet excellently sustains the character of Achilles in this interview: in the Iliad he is described a dutiful son, and always expressing a tender affection for his father Peleus; in the Odyssey he is drawn in the same soft colours: in the Iliad he is represented as a man of strong resentment; in the Odyssey, he first imagines that his father suffers, and upon this imagination he immediately takes fire, and flies into threats and fury.

Dictys, lib. vi. relates, that Peleus was expelled from his kingdom by Acastus, but that Pyrrhus the son of Achilles afterwards revenged the injury.

v. 635. *How, lost thro' love, Eurypylus was slain.*] It must be owned that this passage is very intricate: Strabo himself complains of its obscurity: the poet (says that author) rather proposes an ænigma, than a clear history: for who are these Cetæans, and what are these "presents of women?" And adds, that the grammarians darken, instead of clearing the obscurity. But it is no difficulty to solve these objections from Eustathius.

It is evident from Strabo himself, that Eurypylus reigned near the river Caïcus, over the Myfians, and Pliny confines it to Teuthrany; this agrees with what Ovid writes, *Metam. ii.*

"——— Teuthrantæusque Caïcus."

And Virgil shews us that Caïcus was a river of Myfia, *Georg. iv.*

"Saxosumque sonans Hypanis, Mysusque Caïcus."

But what relation has Caïcus to the Cetæans? Hesychius informs us, that they are a people of Myfia, so called from the river Ce-

To Troy no hero came of nobler line,
Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.

tium, which runs through their country; Κήτειοι, γένος Μυσῶν, ἀπὸ τοῦ παρρῆιοντος ποταμοῦ Κήτεος. This river discharges itself into the Caicus, and consequently the Cetæans were Mysians, over whom Euryplus reigned. It would be endless to transcribe the different opinions of writers cited by Eustathius; some read the verse thus:

Κήτειοι κλείνοντο γυναῖκων, εἵνεκα δώρων.

Then the meaning will be, "How they fell far from their wives, "for the sake of a reward;" that is, for their pay from Hector, who, as it appears from the Iliad, taxed the Trojans to pay the auxiliaries, one of whom was Eurypylus. Others think the word signifies, "great of stature," and in this sense we find it used in the first line of the fourth Odyssey.

———— Λακεδαίμονα κητώεσσαν.

But I have followed the first opinion, as appearing most probable and natural.

But how are we to explain the second objection, or γυναῖκων εἵνεκα δώρων? Some (says Eustathius) understand the expression as applied to Neoptolemus, and not Eurypylus; namely, Eurypylus and his soldiers fell by means of the "gifts of women;" that is, Neoptolemus was led to the war by the promise of having Hermione in marriage, the daughter of Menelaus, which promise occasioned the death of Eurypylus, by bringing Neoptolemus to the siege of Troy. Others understand it to be spoken of a golden vine, sent by Priam to his sister Astyoche the mother of Eurypylus, to induce her to persuade her son to undertake this expedition to Troy, where he was slain by the son of Achilles; this vine was said to be given to Tros the father of Priam by Jupiter, as a recompence for his carrying away his son Ganymede to be his cup-bearer; but this is too much a fable to be followed. Others more probably assert, that Priam had promised one of his daughters to Eurypylus, to engage his assistance in the war; and this agrees very well with Homer's manner of writing in many places of the Iliad; and there is a great resemblance between Eurypylus in the Odyssey and Othryoneus in the Iliad, lib. xiii. 461.

Cassandra's love he fought, with boasts of pow'r,
And promis'd conquest was the proffer'd dow'r.

Spondanus cites a passage from Dictys, lib. iv. that very well explains these difficulties: "Inter quæ tam læta (nimirum mortem Achillis, &c.) Priamo supervenit nuncius Eurypylum Te-
"lephi filium ex Mysia adventare, quem rex multis antea illec-
"tum præmiis, ad postremum oblatione Cassandræ confirmave-

When Ilion in the horse receiv'd her doom,
 And unseen armies ambush'd in its womb; 640
 Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,
 'Twas mine on Troy to pour th' imprison'd war:
 Then when the boldest bosom beat with fear,
 When the stern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear;
 Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd, 645
 Flush'd in his cheek, or fally'd in his blood;
 Indignant in the dark recess he stands,
 Pants for the battle, and the war demands;
 His voice breath'd death, and with a martial air 649
 He grasp'd his sword, and shook his glitt'ring spear.
 And when the gods our arms with conquest crown'd,
 When Troy's proud bulwarks smok'd upon the ground,
 Greece to reward her soldier's gallant toils,
 Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd spoils.

Thus great in glory from the din of war 655
 Safe he return'd, without one hostile scar;
 Tho' spears in iron tempests rain'd around,
 Yet innocent they play'd, and guiltless of a wound.

While yet I spoke, the shade with transport glow'd,
 Rose in his majesty, and nobler trod; 660
 With haughty stalk he sought the distant glades
 Of warrior kings, and join'd th' illustrious shades.

Now without number ghost by ghost arose,
 All wailing with unutterable woes.
 Alone, apart, in discontented mood 665
 A gloomy shade, the sullen Ajax stood;
 For ever sad with proud disdain he pin'd,
 And the lost arms for ever stung his mind;
 Tho' to the contest Thetis gave the laws,
 And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause. 670

"rat, addiderat etiam auream vitem, & ob id per populos me-
 "morabilem."

v. 669. *Tho' to the contest Thetis gave the laws,
 And Pallas, by the Trojans, judg'd the cause.*]

O why was I victorious in the strife;
 O dear-bought honour with so brave a life!
 With him the strength of war, the soldiers pride,
 Our second hope to great Achilles dy'd!
 Touch'd at the sight from tears I scarce refrain, 675
 And tender sorrow thrills in ev'ry vein;
 Pensive and sad I stand, at length accost,
 With accents mild th' inexorable ghost.

Still burns thy rage? and can brave souls resent
 Ev'n after death? Relent, great shade, relent! 680
 Perish those arms which by the gods decree
 Accurs'd our army with the loss of thee!
 With thee we fell; Greece wept thy hapless fates;
 And shook astonish'd thro' her hundred states;

There are two particulars which want explication in these verses: how did Thetis give the law to the contest between Ajax and Ulysses? and how could the Trojans be made judges to determine between two Grecian heroes? Thetis the mother of Achilles was a goddess, and out of honour to her, the chiefs of the Grecian army proposed the arms of her son as a reward to the most worthy; and poetry, to give a magnificence to the story, introduces the goddess as acting in person what is done upon her account. Thetis may properly be said to be desirous that the memory of her son should be honoured; and Homer to express this desire poetically, tells us it was the act of that goddess, to propose the arms of Achilles as a reward to the most worthy of the Grecian heroes.

The second difficulty is fully explained by Eustathius: Agamemnon finding it an invidious affair to give the preference to any one of the Grecian heroes, and being willing to avoid the reproach of partiality, commanded the Trojan prisoners to be brought before the whole army, and asked from which of the two heroes, Ajax or Ulysses, they had received the greater detriment; they immediately replied from Ulysses; thus the Trojans adjudged the cause. The poet adds, that this was done by Minerva; that is, the affair was conducted with wisdom, the result of which in poetry is usually ascribed to the goddess of it; and no doubt but the goddess of wisdom must always prefer wisdom to mere valour, or an Ulysses to an Ajax. This decision is related in a very different manner by other poets; in particular by Ovid, in his *Metamorphosis*; but Lucian in his *Dialogues* agrees with Homer in every point very circumstantially, and consequently with some obscurity; but what I have here said fully explains that dialogue of Lucian, as well as this passage of Homer.

Not more, when great Achilles prest the ground, 685
And breath'd his manly spirit thro' the wound.

O deem thy fall not ow'd to man's decree,
Jove hated Greece, and punish'd Greece in thee!
Turn then, oh peaceful turn, thy wrath controul,
And calm the raging tempest of thy soul. 690

While yet I speak, the shade disdains to stay,
In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.

Touch'd at his sour retreat, thro' deepest night,
Thro' hell's black bounds I had pursu'd his flight,
And forc'd the stubborn spectre to reply; 695
But wond'rous visions drew my curious eye.
High on a throne tremendous to behold,
Stern Minos waves a mace of burnish'd gold;
Around ten thousand thousand spectres stand
Thro' the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band. 700

v. 691. — — *The shade disdains to stay,*

In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.]

This silence of Ajax was very much admired by the ancients, and Longinus proposes it as an instance of the true sublimity of thought, which springs from an elevation of soul, and not from the diction; for a man may be truly sublime without speaking a word: thus in the silence of Ajax there is something more noble, than in any thing he could possibly have spoken. Monsieur Rapin agrees with Longinus: the stubborn untractable Ajax (says that author) could not have made a better return to the compliments full of submission which were paid him by Ulysses, than by a disdainful and contemptuous silence: Ajax has more the air of grandeur and majesty, when he says nothing, than when the poet makes him speak. Virgil was sensible of the beauty of it, and paints Dido in the attitude of Ajax. Fraguier infinitely prefers the silence of Dido to that of Ajax; she was a woman disappointed in love, and therefore no wonder if she was greatly passionate, and sunk under the weight of the calamity; but Ajax was a hero, and ought to have freed himself by his courage from such an unworthy degree of resentment. But to me there appears no weight in this objection: we must remember what an hero Ajax is, a sour, stubborn, untractable hero; and upon all occasions given to taciturnity; this is his universal and notorious character through the whole Iliad: the poet therefore adapts his description to it, and he is the same Ajax in the Odyssey as he was in the Iliad. Had this been spoken of any other hero, the criticism had been more just, but in Ajax this stubborn silence is proper and noble.

Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls,
Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.

There huge Orion of portentous size,
Swift thro' the gloom a giant-hunter flies;

v. 701. *Still as they plead* —] The expression in the Greek is remarkable, "ἤμενοι, ἑσταότες τε; that is, "standing and sitting;" this is to be referred to different persons; the ἑσταότες were the *συγδικασαί*, or persons who pleaded the cause of the guilty or innocent before the infernal judges: the ἤμενοι were the persons for whom they pleaded, or those who were about to receive judgment. I doubt not but this was a custom observed in the courts of judicature in the days of Homer. Eustathius.

v. 703. — *Orion of portentous size,
Swift thro' the gloom a giant-hunter flies.]*

The diversion of this infernal hunter may seem extraordinary in pursuing the shades of beasts; but it was the opinion of the ancients, that the same passions to which men were subject on earth continued with them in the other world; and their shades were liable to be affected in the same manner as their bodies: thus we frequently see them shedding tears, and Sisyphus sweats, in rolling the stone up the mountain. Virgil,

"Stant terra defixæ hastæ, passimque soluti

"Per campos pascuntur equi, quæ cura nitentes

"Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos."

And again,

— "Curæ non ipsâ in morte relinquunt."

I cannot but be of opinion that Milton has far surpassed both the Greek and the Roman poet, in the description of the employment of the fallen angels in hell, as the ideas are more noble and suitable to the characters he describes.

Part on the plain, or in the air sublime:
Upon the wing, or in swift race contend,
As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields:
Part curb the fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form:
Others with vast Typhæan rage more fell
Rend up both rocks, and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind: Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.

— Others more mild
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many an harp,
Their own heroic deeds —
The song was partial, but the harmony
Suspended hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience, &c.

A pond'rous mace of brass with direful sway

705

Aloft he whirls, to crush the savage prey ;

Stern beasts in trains that by his truncheon fell,

Now grisly forms, shoot o'er the lawns of hell.

There Tityus large and long, in fetters bound,

O'erspreads nine acres of infernal ground ;

710

v. 709. *There Tityus* —] It is needless to mention that Virgil has adorned his descent into hell with most of these fables borrowed from Homer ; it is equally unnecessary to relate what antiquity says of these fabled persons, and their histories ; but the moral of them all is observed by Eustathius, and fully explained by Lucretius, which I will lay together from Mr. Dryden's translation.

— The dismal tales that poets tell
 Are verif'd on earth, and not in hell ;
 No Tantalus looks with a fearful eye,
 Or dreads th' impending rock to crush him from on high ;
 No Tityus, torn by vultures, lies in hell,
 Nor could the lobes of his rank liver swell
 To that prodigious mass, for their eternal meal.
 But he's the Tityus, who, by love oppress'd,
 Or tyrant-passion preying on his breast,
 And ever anxious thoughts, is robb'd of rest.
 The Sisyphus is he, whom noise and strife
 Seduce from all the soft retreats of life,
 To vex the government, disturb the laws :
 Drunk with the fumes of popular applause,
 He courts the giddy crowd to make him great,
 And sweats and toils in vain, to mount the sov'reign seat,
 For still to aim at pow'r, and still to fail,
 Ever to strive, and never to prevail,
 What is it but in reason's true account,
 To heave the stone against the rising mount ?

I will only add the reason from Eustathius, why Tityus was fabled to be the son of the earth ; it was from his being immerfed in worldly cares, and from his centering all his affections upon the earth, as if he had sprung from it ; this is alluded to by the expression *κεῖμενον ἐν δαπέδῳ*. Spondanus gives us another reason ; Elara being pregnant by Jupiter, he to avoid the jealousy of Juno concealed her in a cavern of the earth, where Tityus being born, is fabled to be the son of the earth, he adds, that the fiction of his covering nine acres, arose from that space of ground which was enclosed for his place of burial. Perhaps the story of Tantalus was invented solely to paint the nature of a covetous person, who starves amidst plenty, like Tantalus in the midst of water. Thus Horace applies it, Satyr i. v. 70.

Two rav'nous vultures, furious for their food,
 Scream o'er the fiend, and riot in his blood,
 Incessant gore the liver in his breast,
 Th' immortal liver grows, and gives th' immortal feast.
 For as o'er Panopé's enamell'd plains 715
 Latona journey'd to the Pythian fanes.
 With haughty love th' audacious monster strove
 To force the goddess, and to rival Jove.

There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds
 Pours out deeps groans; (with groans all hell resounds)
 Ev'n in the circling floods refreshment craves, 721
 And pines with thirst amidst a sea of waves:
 When to the water he his lip applies,
 Back from his lip the treach'rous water flies.
 Above, beneath, around his hapless head, 725
 Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread;
 There figs sky-dy'd, a purple hue disclose,
 Green looks the olive, the pomegranate glows,
 There dangling pears exalted scents unfold,
 And yellow apples ripen into gold; 730
 The fruit he strives to seize: but blasts arise,
 Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

I turn'd my eye, and as I turn'd survey'd.
 A mournful vision! the Sisyphian shade;
 With many a weary step, and many a groan, 735
 Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone;

"Tantalus a labris sitiens fugientia captat
 "Flumina. Quid rides? mutato nomine de te
 "Fabula narratur, congestis undique farris
 "Indormis inhians, & tanquam parcere sacris
 "Cogeris" ———

v. 736. *Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.*] This is a very remarkable instance of the beauty of Homer's versification; it is taken notice of by Eustathius, but copiously explained by Dionysius Halicarnassius, in his treatise of placing of words.

Λῆαν βαράζοντα πελώριον ἀμφιπέτρειν,
 "Ἦτον δ' μὲν σκηριπτόμενον χερσὶν τε ποσσὶν τε,
 Λῆαν ἀνω ὤθεσθε. ———

The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the
ground.

Again the restless orb his toil renews,
Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dew. 740

Now I the strength of Hercules behold,
A tow'ring spectre of gigantic mould,
A shadowy form ! for high in heav'n's abodes
Himself resides, a god among the gods ;

Here (says Dionysius) we see in the choice and disposition of the words the fact which they describe ; the weight of the stone, and the striving to heave it up the mountain : to effect this, Homer clogs the verse with spondees or long syllables, and leaves the vowels open, as in *λάαν*, and in *ἄνω ὄθεσκε*, which two words it is impossible to pronounce without hesitation and difficulty ; the very words and syllables are heavy, and as it were make resistance in the pronunciation, to express the heaviness of the stone, and the difficulty with which it is forced up the mountain. To give the English reader a faint image of the beauty of the original in the translation, I have loaded the verse with monosyllables, and these almost all begin with aspirates.

Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone.

Homer is no less happy in describing the rushing down of the stone from the top of the mountain.

Αὐτίς ἔπειτα πείδονδε κυλίνδετο λάας ἀναιδής.

Is it not evident, (continues Dionysius) that the swiftness of the verse imitates the celerity of the stone in its descent ; nay, that the verse runs with the greater rapidity ? What is the cause of this ? It is because there is not one monosyllable in the line, and but two dissyllables, ten of the syllables are short, and not one spondee in it, except one that could not be avoided at the conclusion of it ; there is no hiatus or gap between word and word, no vowels left open to retard the celerity of it : the whole seems to be but one word, the syllables melt into one another, and flow away with the utmost rapidity in a torrent of dactyls. I was too sensible of the beauty of this not to endeavour to imitate it, though unsuccessfully : I have therefore thrown it into the swiftness of an Alexandrine, to make it of a more proportionable number of syllables with the Greek.

I refer the reader for a fuller explication of these verses to Dionysius.

v. 743. — *Hercules, a shadowy form.*] This is the passage formerly referred to in these annotations, to prove that Hercules

There in the bright assemblies of the skies, 745
 He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.
 Here hov'ring ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,
 And clang their pinions with terrific sound ;
 Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
 Th' aerial arrow from the twanging bow. 750
 Around his breast a wond'rous zone is roll'd,
 Where woodland monsters grin in fretted gold,
 There fullen lions sternly seem to roar,
 The bear to growl, to foam the tusky boar,
 There war and havock and destruction stood, 755
 And vengeful murder red with human blood.
 Thus terribly adorn'd the figures shine,
 Inimitably wrought with skill divine.

was in heaven, while his shade was in the infernal regions; a full evidence of the partition of the human composition into three parts: the body is buried in the earth; the image or εἰδωλον descends into the regions of the departed; and the soul, or the divine part of man, is received into heaven: thus the body of Hercules was consumed in the flames, his image is in hell, and his soul in heaven. There is a beautiful moral couched in the fable of his being married to Hebe, or youth, after death: to imply, that a perpetual youth or a reputation which never grows old, is the reward of those heroes, who like Hercules employ their courage for the good of human-kind.

v. 758. *Inimitably wrought with skill divine.*] This verse is not without obscurity; Eustathius gives us several interpretations of it.

Μὴ, τεχνησάμεν, μὴ δ' ἄλλό τι τεχνήσαιο.

The negative μὴ, by being repeated, seems to be redundant; and this in a great measure occasions the difficulty; but in the Greek language two negatives more strongly deny; this being premised, we may read the verse as if the former μὴ were absent, and then the meaning will be, "He that made this zone, never made any thing equal to it;" as if we should say, that Phidias who made the statue of Jupiter never made any other statue like it; that is, he employed the whole power of his skill upon it. Others understand the verse as an execration: "Oh never, never may the hand that made it, make any thing again so terrible as this zone:" and this will give some reason for the repetition of the negative particles. Dacier approves of this latter explication, and moralizes upon it: It proceeds (says she) from a tender sentiment of humanity in Ulysses, who wishes that there may never more be occasion for such a

The mighty ghost advanc'd with awful look,
And turning his grim visage, sternly spoke. 760

O exercis'd in grief! by arts refin'd!
O taught to bear the wrongs of base mankind!
Such, such was I! still tost from care to care,
While in your world I drew the vital air!
Ev'n I who from the lord of thunders rose, 765
Bore toils and dangers, and a weight of woes;
To a base monarch still a slave confin'd,
(The hardest bondage to a gen'rous mind!)
Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way,
And dragg'd the three-mouth'd dog to upper day; 770
Ev'n hell I conquer'd, thro' the friendly aid
Of Maia's offspring and the martial maid.

Thus he, nor deign'd for our reply to stay,
But turning stalk'd with giant-~~brides~~ away.

Curious to view the kings of antient days, 775
The mighty dead that live in endless praise,

design, as the artist executed in this belt of Hercules: that there may be no more giants to conquer, no more monsters to tame, nor no more human blood to be shed. I wish that such a pious and well natured explication were to be drawn from the passage! But how is it possible that the artist who made this zone should ever make another, when he had been in his grave some centuries? (for such a distance there was between the days of Hercules and Ulysses;) and consequently it would be impertinent to wish it. I have therefore followed the former interpretation. I will only add, that this belt of Hercules is the reverse of the girdle of Venus; in that there is a collection of every thing that is amiable, in this, a variety of horrors; but both are master-pieces in their kind.

v. 769. *Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way.*] Nothing can be more artfully inserted than the mention of this descent of Hercules into the regions of the dead: Ulysses shews by it at least that it was a vulgar opinion, and consequently within the degrees of poetical probability; a poet being at liberty to follow common fame: in particular, it could not fail of having a full effect upon his Phæacian auditors, not only as it in some measure sets him upon a level with Hercules, but as it is an example of a like undertaking with this which he has been relating, and therefore a probable method to gain their belief of it. Eustathius.

Resolv'd I stand; and haply had survey'd
 The god-like Theseus, and Perithous' shade;
 But swarms of spectres rose from deepest hell,
 With bloodless visage, and with hideous yell, 780
 They scream, they shriek; sad groans and dismal sounds
 Stun my scar'd ears, and pierce hell's utmost bounds.
 No more my heart the dismal din sustains,
 And my cold blood hangs shiv'ring in my veins;
 Left Gorgon rising from th' infernal lakes, 785
 With horrors arm'd, and curls of hissing snakes,
 Should fix me, stiffen'd at the monstrous sight,
 A stony image, in eternal night!

v. 777. — *And haply had survey'd*
The god-like Theseus —]

Plutarch in his life of Theseus informs us, that this verse has been thought not genuine; but added to the *Odyssey* in honour of the Athenians by Pisistratus.

The poet shews us that he had still a noble fund of invention, and had it in his power to open new scenes of wonder and entertainment; but that this infernal episode might not be too long, he shifts the scene: the invention of the Gorgon, which terrifies him from a longer abode in these realms of darkness gives a probable reason for his immediate return. Eustathius informs us from Athenæus, that Alexander the Midian writes in his *History of Animals*, that there really was a creature in Lybia, which the Nomades called a gorgon; it resembled a wild ram, or as some affirm a calf; whose breath was of such a poisonous nature, as to kill all that approached it: in the same region the Catoblepton is found, a creature like a bull, whose eyes are so fixed in the head as chiefly to look downward; Pliny calls it Catoblepas, lib. viii. cap. 21. which is likewise supposed to kill with its eyes: the Gorgon (proceeds Athenæus) has its hair hanging over its eyes down from the forehead, of such thickness that it scarce is able to remove it, to guide itself from danger; but it kills not by its breath, but with emanations darted from its eyes: the beast was well known in the time of Marius, for certain of his soldiers seeing it, mistook it for a wild sheep, and pursued to take it; but the hair being removed by the motion of its flying, it slew all upon whom it looked: at length the Nomades, who knew the nature of the beast, destroyed it with darts at a distance, and carried it to the general Marius. However little truth there be in this story, it is a sufficient ground for poetical fictions, and all the fables that are ascribed to the Gorgon.

Straight from the direful coast to purer air
 I speed my flight, and to my mates repair. 790
 My mates ascend the ship ; they strike their oars ;
 The mountains lessen, and retreat the shores ;
 Swift o'er the waves we fly ; the fresh'ning gales
 Sing thro' the shrouds, and stretch the swelling sails.

v. 789. ——— *To purer air*
I speed my flight. ———]

It may not probably be unpleasant to the reader, to observe the manner how the two great poets Homer and Virgil close the scene of their infernal adventures, by restoring their heroes to the earth. Ulysses returns by the same way he descended, of which we have a plain description in the beginning of this book : Virgil takes a different method, he borrows his conclusion from another part of Homer ; in which he describes the two gates of sleep ; the one is ivory, the other of horn : through the ivory gate, issue falsehoods, through the gate of horn, truths : Virgil dismisses Æneas through the gate of falsehood : now what is this, but to inform us that all he relates is nothing but a dream, and that dream a falsehood ? I submit it to the critics who are more disposed to find fault than I am, to determine whether Virgil ought to be censured for such an acknowledgment, or praised for his ingenuity ?

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

* B O O K XII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis.

He relates, how after his return from the shades, he was sent by Circe on his voyage, by the coast of the Sirens, and by the streight of Scylla and Charybdis: the manner in which he escaped those dangers: how being cast on the island Trinacria, his companions destroyed the oxen of the sun: the vengeance that followed; how all perished by shipwreck except himself, who swimming on the mast of the ship, arrived on the island of Calypso. With which his narration concludes.

THUS o'er the rolling surge the vessel flies,
'Till from the waves th' Ææan hills arise.
Here the gay morn resides in radiant bow'rs,
Here keeps her revels with the dancing hours;

* We are now drawing to a conclusion of the episodic narration of the *Odyssey*; it may therefore not be unentertaining to speak something concerning the nature of it, before we dismiss it.

There are two ways of relating past subjects: the one, simply and methodically by a plain rehearsal, and this is the province of history; the other artificially, where the author makes no appearance in person, but introduces speakers, and this is the practice of epic poetry. By this method the poet brings upon the stage those very persons who performed the action he represents: he makes them speak and act over again the words and actions they spoke or performed before, and in some sort transports his auditors to the time when, and the places where, the action was done. This method is of so great use, it prevents the poet from delivering his story in a plain simple way like an historian, it makes the auditors witnes-

Here Phœbus rising in th' ætherial way,
Thro' heav'n's bright portals pours the beamy day. 5

ses of it, and the action discovers itself. Thus for instance, it is not Homer, but Ulysses who speaks; the poet is withdrawn, and the hero whose story we hear is as it were raised from the grave, and relates it in person to the audience. Aristotle observes, that the epic poem ought to be dramatic, that is active; Homer (says that author) ought to be especially commended for being the only poet who knew exactly what to do; he speaks little himself, but introduces some of his persons, a man or a woman, a god or a goddess; and this renders his poem active or dramatic. Narration is the very soul that animates the poem, it gives an opportunity to the poet to adorn it with different episodes; it has, as it were, the whole world for its stage, and gives him liberty to search through the creation for incidents or adventures for the employment of his heroes. Thus for instance, he was at liberty to ascribe the several dangers of Scylla and Charybdis, of Polypheme and Antiphates, to Ulysses, though that hero had been as unacquainted with those dangers, as Æneas was in reality with Dido; the choice of the episodes being not essential, but arbitrary.

In short, it is from this episodic narration that the poet could at all find room to place these episodes in the *Odyssey*. Aristotle, I confess, has set no precise limits to the time of the action, but the critics in general confine it to one campaign; at least, they affirm this to be the most perfect duration, according to the model of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Now this episodic narration gives the poet an opportunity to relate all that is contained in four books without breaking in upon the time of the action; for all that we read between the eighth book and the thirteenth comprehends only the space of one evening; namely, the evening of the thirty-third day. The poet inserts all the adventures that happened to Ulysses in almost ten years from his departure from Troy, into the compass of one evening by way of narration, and so maintains the unity both of the time and action.

I speak not of the narration in general; concerning which the curious may consult Bossu, or Dryden's preface to the translation of the *Æneis*.

v. 1. *Thus o'er the rolling surge —*] The words in the original are *πῶλαμοῖο ῥόον ὠκεανοῖο*, which Strabo judges to mean no more than a part of the ocean, for if it be otherwise understood it will be a tautology, and who would write that "he went out of the "ocean into the ocean," as it must be rendered if *πῶλαμῖος* be the same with *θάλασσα* in the next line? But it is perhaps better to understand the passage literally and plainly, only to denote the place from whence Ulysses returned from his infernal voyage; that is, from the extremity of the ocean. It is usual for the waves of the sea to bear violently and rapidly upon some shores, the waters being

At once we fix our halbers on the land,
At once descend, and press the desert sand ;

pent up by the nearness of the land, and therefore form a current, or *πόσιν*. So that the expression means no more than Ulysses surmounted this current and then gained the wide ocean.

It is likewise evident from the beginning of this book, that Ulysses passed only one night in hell ; for he arrived at the Cimmerians in one day, saw the visions of hell in the following night, and in the space of the next day returned from the Cimmerians in the evening to Circe's island, as appears from his going to repose immediately upon his landing.

It may be further proved that this was a nocturnal interview, from the nature of the magical incantations which were always performed by night ; all sacrifices were offered by night to the infernal powers, the offering itself was black, to represent the kingdom of darkness : thus also in other poets the moon is said to turn pale at these magical rites, or as Virgil expresses it,

“ Carmina vel cælo possunt deducere lunam.”

And indeed, as Eustathius observes (from whom this note is chiefly translated) it would have been absurd to have represented the realms of darkness surveyed by the light of the day.

v. 3. *Here the gay morn resides in radiant bow'rs,
Here keeps her revels — —*]

This passage is full of obscurity : for how is it possible to suppose this island of Circe to be the residence of the morning ; that is for the day to rise immediately upon it, when it is known to lie in a western situation ? Some have imagined that this is spoken solely with respect to Ulysses, who returning from the shades, might properly say that he arrived at the place where the day resides, that is to a place enlightened by the sun. Others understand it comparatively, with respect to the Cimmerians, or rather to the realms of death, which Homer places in the west ; with regard to these, *Ææa* may be said to lie in the east, or in the poetical language, to be the residence of the morning. Besides, the Circean promontory is of an extraordinary altitude, and consequently the beams at sun-rising may fall upon it ; nay, it is said to be illustrated by the sun even by night. Others have conjectured, that what is here said implies no more than that Ulysses landed upon the eastern parts of the island ; and lastly, others not improbably refer the whole to the word “ocean” in the former line, and then the whole passage will be clear, and agree with the fable of the sun's rising and setting in the ocean. This is what Eustathius remarks, who adds, that the ancients understood *χόραι* not to signify “dances,” but *χόραι*, the “regions of the morning.” I have translated it in the former sense, according to the consent of most interpreters : and I

There worn and wasted, lose our cares in sleep
To the hoarse murmurs of the rolling deep.

10

Soon as the morn restor'd the day, we pay'd
Sepulchral honours to Elpenor's shade.
Now by the ax the rushing forest bends,
And the huge pile along the shore ascends.

am persuaded it is used to denote the pleasure and gaiety which the sun restores to the whole creation, when dispelling the melancholy darkness, he restores light and gladness to the earth; which is imaged to us by the playing or dancing of the first beams of the sun; or rather of Aurora, who properly may be said to dance, being a goddess. Dacier renders *χόροι*, dances; but judges that Homer here follows a fabulous geography, and that as he transported the Cimmerians with all their darkness from the Bosphorus to Campania; so likewise he now removes *Ææa* with all its light from Cholchis into Italy: and therefore the poet gives the properties and situation to the island of Circe, which are only true of the eastern Cholchis.

It is very evident (continues she) that Homer was perfectly acquainted with the Phœnician story; he tells us that Elpenor was buried upon the promontory on the sea-shores, and that it was called by his name, Elpenor. Now the Phœnicians, who endeavoured to naturalize all names in their own language, affirmed, according to Bochart, that this promontory was not so called from Elpenor, but from their word *Hilbinor*, which signifies, “ubi al-
“ *bescit lux matutina;*” that is, “where the dawning of the day
“ begins to appear.” This promontory being of great height, the rays of the morning might fall upon it; and this tradition might furnish Homer with his fiction of the bowers, and dances of it.

What may seem to confirm Dacier's opinion of the transportation of Cholchis into Italy, is the immediate mention the poet makes of Jason, and *Æætes* king of Cholchis: besides the antients believed Phasis, a river of Cholchis, to be the bounds of the habitable oriental world: and *Ææa* being the capital of it, lying upon the Phasis, it might very rationally be mistaken for the place where the sun rose: thus Mimnermus writes,

Αἴηταο πόλιν τόθι τ' ὠκεὸς ἡελίοιο
Ἀκτῖνες χρυσέῳ κείαται ἐν θαλάμῳ
Ὀκεανῷ παρὰ χεῖλός' ἐν ὧχεῖο θεῖοι Ἰήσων.

That is, “the city of *Æëtes* where the rays of the sun appear
“ in a bed of gold, above the margin of the ocean, where the di-
“ vine Jason arrived.” This is an evidence that the poet was well acquainted with antiquity, and that (as Strabo judges) his astonishing fictions have truth for their foundation.

Book XII. HOMER's ODYSSEY.

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Around we stand a melancholy train, 15
 And a loud groan re-echoes from the main.
 Fierce o'er the pyre, by fanning breezes spread,
 The hungry flame devours the silent dead.
 A rising tomb, the silent dead to grace,
 Fast by the roarings of the main we place ; 20
 The rising tomb a lofty column bore,
 And high above it rose the tap'ring oar.

Meantime the * goddesses our return survey'd
 From the pale ghosts, and hell's tremendous shade.
 Swift she descends : a train of nymphs divine 25
 Bear the rich viands and the gen'rous wine :
 In act to speak the * pow'r of magic stands,
 And graceful thus accosts the list'ning bands.

O sons of woe ! decreed by adverse fates
 Alive to pass thro' hell's eternal gates ! 30
 All, soon or late, are doom'd that path to tread ;
 More wretched you ! twice number'd with the dead !
 This day adjourn your cares ; exalt your souls,
 Indulge the taste, and drain the sparkling bowls :
 And when the morn unveils her saffron ray, 35
 Spread your broad sails, and plough the liquid way ;
 Lo I this night, your faithful guide, explain
 Your woes by land, your dangers on the main.

The goddess spoke ; in feasts we waste the day,
 'Till Phœbus downward plung'd his burning ray ; 40
 Then sable night ascends, and balmy rest
 Seals ev'ry eye, and calms the troubled breast.
 Then curious she commands me to relate
 The dreadful scenes of Pluto's dreary state,
 She sat in silence while the tale I tell, 45
 The wond'rous visions, and the laws of hell.

Then thus : The lot of man the gods dispose ;
 These ills are past ; now hear thy future woes.

O prince attend ! some fav'ring pow'r be kind,
And print th' important story on thy mind ! 50

Next, where the Sirens dwell, you plough the seas ;
Their song is death, and makes destruction please.

v. 51. *Next, where the Sirens dwell* —] The critics have greatly laboured to explain what was the foundation of this fiction of the Sirens. We are told by some, that the Sirens were queens of certain small islands, named *Sirenusæ*, that lie near Capræ in Italy, and chiefly inhabited the promontory of Minerva, upon the top of which that goddess had a temple, as some affirm, built by Ulysses, according to this verse of Seneca, *Epist. lxxvii.*

“ *Alta procelloso speculatur vertice Pallas.* ”

Here, there was a renowned academy in the reign of the Sirens, famous for eloquence and the liberal sciences, which gave occasion for the invention of this fable of the sweetness of the voice, and attracting songs of the Sirens. But why then are they fabled to be destroyers, and painted in such dreadful colours ? We are told that at last the students abused their knowledge, to the colouring of wrong, the corruption of manners, and subversion of government ; that is, in the language of poetry, they were feigned to be transformed into monsters, and with their music to have enticed passengers to their ruin, who there consumed their patrimonies, and poisoned their virtues with riot and effeminacy. The place is now called *Massa*. In the days of Homer the Sirens were fabled to be two only in number, as appears from his speaking of them in the dual, as ὅπα Σεϊρήνοιν, νῆσον Σεϊρήνοιν ; their names (adds Eustathius) were *Thelxiepæa*, and *Aglaopheme*. Other writers, in particular *Lycophron*, mention three Sirens, *Ligæa*, *Parthenope*, and *Leucosia*. Some are of opinion (continues the same author) that they were φαλγείας ἢ ἐταίριδας ; that is, “ singing women “ and harlots,” who by the sweetness of their voices drew the unwary to ruin their health and fortune. Others tell us of a certain bay contracted within winding freights and broken cliffs, which by the singing of the winds, and beating of the waters, returns a delightful harmony, that allures the passenger to approach, who is immediately thrown against the rocks, and swallowed up by the violent eddies.

But others understand the whole passage allegorically, or as a fable containing an excellent moral, to shew that if we suffer ourselves to be too much allured by the pleasures of an idle life, the end will be destruction : thus *Horace* moralizes it ;

“ — — Vitanda est improba Siren

“ *Desidia* ” — — —

But the fable may be applied to all pleasures in general, which if too eagerly pursued betray the uncautious into ruin ; while wise men, like *Ulysses*, making use of their reason stop their ears against their insinuations.

Unblest the man, whom music wins to stay
 Nigh the curst shore, and listen to the lay;
 No more that wretch shall view the joys of life, 55
 His blooming offspring, or his beauteous wife!
 In verdant meads they sport, and wide around
 Lie human bones, that whiten all the ground;
 The ground polluted floats with human gore,
 And human carnage taints the dreadful shore. 60
 Fly swift the dang'rous coast; let ev'ry ear
 Be stopp'd against the song! 'tis death to hear!
 Firm to the mast with chains thyself be bound,
 Nor trust thy virtue to th' enchanting sound.
 If mad with transport, freedom thou demand, 65
 Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, and added band to band.

These seas o'erpass'd, be wise! but I refrain
 To mark distinct thy voyage o'er the main:
 New horrors rise! let prudence be thy guide,
 And guard thy various passage thro' the tide. 70

High o'er the main two rocks exalt their brow,
 The boiling billows thund'ring roll below;

v. 57. ——— *Around*

Lie human bones, that whiten all the ground.]

There is a great similitude between this passage and the words of Solomon in the Proverbs, where there is a most beautiful description of an harlot, in the eighth and ninth chapters.

"I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths,
 "a young man void of understanding; and behold there met him
 "a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart, &c.
 "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, she forced
 "him with the flattering of her lips; he goeth after her straight-
 "way, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, but he knoweth not that
 "the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell."

This may serve for a comment upon Homer, and it is an instance, that without any violence the nature of harlots may be concealed under the fables of the Sirens.

v. 71. *High o'er the main two rocks ———*] There is undoubtedly a great amplification in the description of Scylla and Charybdis; it may not therefore be unnecessary to lay before the reader, what is truth and what fiction.

Thro' the vast waves the dreadful wonders move,
Hence nam'd erratic by the gods above.

Thucydides, lib. iv. thus describes it. " This streight is the sea that flows between Rhegium and Messenè, where at the narrowest distance, Sicily is divided from the continent ; and this is that part of the sea which Ulysses is said to have passed, and it is called Charybdis : this sea, by reason of the streights, and the concourse of the Tyrrhene and Sicilian seas breaking violently into it, and there raising great commotions, is with good reason called *χαλεπή*, or destructive." Charybdis stands on the coast of Sicily ; Scylla on the coast of Italy.

Mr. Sandys examined these rocks and seas with a particular view to the descriptions of the poets : speaking of Charybdis, he writes, " When the winds begin to ruffle, especially from the south, it forthwith runs round with violent eddies, so that many vessels miscarry by it. The stream through the streight runs toward the Ionian, and part of it sets into the haven, which turning about, and meeting with other streams, makes so violent an encounter that ships are glad to prevent the danger by coming to an anchor. Scylla, adds he, is seated in the midst of a bay, upon the neck of a narrow mountain, which thrusts itself into the sea, having at the uppermost end a steep high rock, so celebrated by the poets, and hyperbolically described by Homer as inaccessible. The fables are indeed well fitted to the place, there being divers little sharp rocks at the foot of the greater : these are the dogs that are said to bark there, the waters by their repercussion from them make a noise like the barking of dogs ; and the reason why Scylla is said to devour the fishes, as Homer expresses it,

When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,
The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food ;
She makes the huge leviathan her prey,
And all the monsters of the wat'ry way.

" The reason of this is, because these rocks are frequented by lamprons, and greater fishes, that devour the bodies of the drowned. But Scylla is now without danger, the current not setting upon it ; and I much wonder at the proverb,

" Incidit in Scyllam qui vult vitare Charybdim,"

" when they stand twelve miles distant : I rather conjecture, adds he, that there has been more than one Charybdis, occasioned by the recoiling streams : as there is one between the south end of this bay of Scylla and the opposite point of Sicily ; there the waves jostling make a violent eddy, which when the winds are rough, more than threaten destruction to ships, as I have heard from the Scyllians, when seeking perhaps to avoid the then more impetuous turning, they have been driven by weather upon the not far distant Scylla."

No bird of air, no dove of swiftest wing,
That bears ambrosia to th' ætherial king,

Strabo (as Eustathius remarks) speaking of the Leontines, says, that they were an unhospitable people, Cyclopeans, and Læstrigons: and adds, that Scylla and Charybdis were inhabited by robbers and murderers. From the terrible situation of those rocks; and the murders and depredations of the robbers, these fictions might arise: they might murder six of the companions of Ulysses, and throw them into the sea from Scylla, which may be expressed in their being said to be swallowed up by that monster.

Bochart judges that the names of Scylla and Charybdis are of Phœnician extract, the one derived from Sool, which signifies loss and ruin, the other from Chorobdam, which implies the abyss of destruction.

It is highly probable that these rocks were more dangerous formerly than at these times, the violence of the waters may not only have enlarged their channel by time, but by throwing up banks and sands have diverted their course from bearing upon these rocks with the same violence as antiently; add to this, that men by art may have contributed to render these seas more safe, being places of great resort and navigation. Besides, the unskillfulness of the antients in sea affairs, and the smallness and form of their vessels, might render those seas very dangerous to them, which are safe to modern navigators.

v. 74. *Hence nam'd erratic —*] It will reconcile the reader in some measure to the boldness of these fictions, if he considers that Homer, to render his poetry more marvellous, joins what has been related of the Symplegades, to the description of Scylla and Charybdis: such a fiction of the jussling of these rocks could not be shocking to the ears of the antients, who had before heard of the same property in the Symplegades. The whole fable is perhaps grounded upon appearance: navigators looking upon these rocks at a distance, might in different views, according to the position of the ship, sometimes see them in a direct line, and then they would appear to join, and after they had passed a little further they might look upon them obliquely, and then they would be discovered to be at some distance; and this might give occasion to the fable of their meeting and recoiling alternately. Strabo agrees, that Homer borrowed his description of Scylla and Charybdis from the Symplegades; Homer (says he) describes these, like the Cyanean rocks; he continually lays the foundation of his fables upon some well known history: thus he feigns these rocks to be full of dangers and horrors, according to the relations of the Cyanean, which from their jussling are callest Symplegades.

v. 75. — *No dove of swiftest wing,*

That bears ambrosia to th' ætherial king.]

What might give Homer this notion, might be what is related of

Shuns the dire rocks : in vain she cuts the skies,
 'The dire rocks meet, and crush her as she flies;
 Not the fleet bark, when prosp'rous breezes play,
 Ploughs o'er that roaring surge its desperate way; 80
 O'erwhelm'd it sinks : while round a smoke expires,
 And the waves flashing seem to burn with fires.
 Scarce the fam'd Argo pass'd these raging floods,
 The sacred Argo, fill'd with demigods !
 Ev'n she had sunk, but Jove's imperial bride 85
 Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.

High in the air the rock its summit shrouds,
 In brooding tempests, and in rolling clouds;
 Loud storms around and mists eternal rise,
 Beat its bleak brow, and intercept the skies. 90
 When all the broad expansion bright with day
 Glows with th' autumnal or the summer ray,

the Symplegades. Phineus being asked by Jason if he could pass those rocks with safety, he desires to know how swift the vessel was; Jason answers, as swift as a dove; Then, said Phineus, send a dove between the rocks, and if she escapes, you may pass in safety: Jason complies, and the pigeon in her passage lost only her tail, that hero immediately sets sail, and escapes with the loss only of his rudder: this story being reported of the Symplegades, might give Homer the hint of applying the crushing of the doves to Scylla and Charybdis. You may find in Eustathius several far-fetched notions upon this passage, but I shall pass them over in silence. Longinus blames it, and I have ventured in the translation to omit that particular which occasioned his censure.

v. 85. — *Jove's imperial bride*
Wing'd her fleet sail — }

A poet should endeavour to raise his images and expressions, as far as possible above meanness and vulgarity: in this respect no poet was ever more happy than Homer: this place is an instance of it; it means no more than that while Jason made his voyage he had favourable winds and serene air. As Juno is frequently used in Homer to denote the air, he ascribes the prosperous wind to that goddess, who presides over the air: Thus in poetry, Juno

Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.

Eustathius.

The summer and the autumn glow in vain,
 The sky for ever low'rs, for ever clouds remain.
 Impervious to the step of man it stands, 95
 Tho' borne by twenty feet, tho' arm'd with twenty
 hands;

Smooth as the polish of the mirrour rise
 The slippery sides, and shoot into the skies.
 Full in the center of this rock display'd,
 A yawning cavern casts a dreadful shade : 100
 Nor the fleet arrow from the twanging bow,
 Sent with full force, could reach the depth below.
 Wide to the west the horrid gulf extends,
 And the dire passage down to hell descends.
 O fly the dreadful fight ! expand thy sails, 105
 Ply the strong oar, and catch the nimble gales ;
 Here Scylla bellows from her dire abodes,
 Tremendous pest ! abhorr'd by man and gods !
 Hideous her voice, and with less terrors roar
 The whelps of lions in the midnight hour. 110

v. 104. *And the dire passage down to hell descends.*] Homer means by hell, the regions of death, and uses it to teach us that there is no passing by this rock without destruction, or in Homer's words it is a sure passage into the kingdom of death. Eustathius.

v. 109. — *With less terrors roar
 The whelps of lions —*]

The words in the original are, σκύλακ' νεογιλῆς, which in the proper and immediate sense do not confine it to the whelps of a lion, but to whelps in general, and perhaps chiefly of the canine kind : νεογιλὸν Eustathius interprets νεωτὶ γινόμενον, or newly whelped, and in the latter sense the passage is understood by that author ; for he writes, φωνὴ σκύλακ' ὀλίγη, σκύλη δὲ μετὰ κακόν ; that is, " the voice of a whelp is low, but Scylla is described " as an huge monster ;" and the poet uses it as we do this expression ; " The voice of a wicked man is soft, but his deeds are mischievous and abominable." I have adventured to translate the words in the other sense, after most interpreters, for Homer expresses the voice of Scylla by Δειδὼν λελακῶτα, or " uttering a dreadful noise ;" now what he calls her voice, is nothing but the roaring of the waves in storms when they beat against that rock ;

Twelve feet deform'd and foul the fiend dispreads;
 Six horrid necks she rears, and six terrific heads;
 Her jaws grin dreadful with three rows of teeth;
 Jaggy they stand, the gaping den of death;
 Her parts obscene the raging billows hide; 115
 Her bosom terribly o'erlooks the tide.
 When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,
 The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food;
 She makes the huge leviathan her prey,
 And all the monsters of the wat'ry way; 120
 The swiftest racer of the azure plain
 Here fills her sails and spreads her oars in vain;
 Fell Scylla rises, in her fury roars,
 At once six mouths expands, at once six men devours.
 Close by, a rock of less enormous height 125
 Breaks the wild waves, and forms a dang'rous streight;
 Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise,
 And shoot a leafy forest to the skies;

and this being very loud, is better represented by the roaring of a lion, than the complaining of a young whelp. Chapman follows Eustathius.

For here the whuling-Scylla shrouds her face,
 That breathes a voice, at all parts, no more base
 Than are a newly-kitten'd kittling's cries.

Which is really burlesque enough. Dacier renders the word by "rugissement d'un jeune lion," or the roarings of a young lion.

v. 118. *The sea-dog and the dolphin are her food.*] Polybius (as Strabo remarks) contends, that Homer in all his fictions alludes to the customs of antiquity: for instance, Scylla was a famous fishery for taking such fishes as Homer mentions: this was the manner of taking the sea-dog; several small boats went out only with two men in it, the one rowed, the other stood with his instrument ready to strike the fish; all the boats had one speculator in common, to give notice when the fish approached, which usually swam with more than half of the body above water: Ulysses is this speculator, who stands armed with his spear; and it is probable, adds Polybius, that Homer thought Ulysses really visited Scylla, since he ascribes to Scylla that manner of fishing which is really practised by the Scyllians.

v. 127. *Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise.*] These particularities, which seem of no consequence, have a very good ef-

Beneath, Charybdis holds her boist'rous reign
 'Midst roaring whirlpools, and absorbs the main; 130
 Thrice in her gulfs the boiling seas subside,
 Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.
 Oh if thy vessel plough the direful waves
 When seas retreating roar within her caves,
 Ye perish all! tho' he who rules the main 135
 Lend his strong aid, his aid he lends in vain.
 Ah shun the horrid gulf! by Scylla fly,
 'Tis better fix to lose, than all to die.

I then: O nymph propitious to my pray'r,
 Goddess divine, my guardian pow'r declare, 140

set in poetry, as they give the relation an air of truth and probability. For what can induce a poet to mention such a tree, if the tree were not there in reality? Neither is this fig-tree described in vain, it is the means of preserving the life of Ulysses in the sequel of the story. The poet describes the fig-tree loaded with leaves; even this circumstance is of use, for the branches would then bend downward to the sea by their weight, and be reached by Ulysses more easily. It shews likewise, that this shipwreck was not in winter, for then the branches are naked. Eustathius.

Dacier gathers from hence, that the season was autumn, meaning the time when Ulysses arrived among the Phæacians; but this is a mistake, for he was cast upon the Ogygian coast by this storm, and there remained with Calypso many years. The branch with which Ulysses girds his loins in the sixth book is described with leaves, and that is indeed a full proof that he was thrown upon the Phæacian shores before the season in which trees shed their leaves, and probably in the autumn.

v. 131. *Thrice in her gulfs the boiling seas subside,
 Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.]*

Strabo quotes this passage to prove, that Homer understood the flux and reflux of the ocean. "An instance, says he, of the care that poet took to inform himself in all things, is what he writes concerning the tides, for he calls the reflux ἀπαρπον, or the revolution of the waters: he tells us, that Scylla (it should be Charybdis) thrice swallows, and thrice refunds the waves; this must be understood of regular tides." There are indeed but two tides in a day, but this is the error of the librarians, who put τρις for δις. Eustathius solves the expression of the three tides differently, it ought to be understood of the νυχθημερον, of the space of the night and day, and then there will be a regular flux and reflux thrice in that time, or every eight hours periodically.

Is the foul fiend from human vengeance freed?
Or if I rise in arms, can Scylla bleed?

Then she: O worn by toils, oh broke in fight,
Still are new toils and war thy dire delight?
Will martial flames for ever fire thy mind, 145
And never, never be to heav'n resign'd?
How vain thy efforts to avenge the wrong?
Deathless the pest! impenetrably strong!
Furious and fell, tremendous to behold!
Ev'n with a look she withers all the bold! 150
She mocks the weak attempts of human might;
O fly her rage! thy conquest is thy flight.
If but to seize thy arms thou make delay,
Again the fury vindicates her prey,
Her six mouths yawn, and six are snatch'd away. }
From her foul womb Cratæis gave to air 156
This dreadful pest! To her direct thy pray'r,
'To curb the monster in her dire abodes,
And guard thee thro' the tumult of the floods.
'Thence to Trinacria's shore you bend your way, 160
Where graze thy herds, illustrious source of day!

v. 142. *Or if I rise in arms, can Scylla bleed?*] This short question excellently declares the undaunted spirit of this hero; Circe lays before him the most affrighting danger; Ulysses immediately offers to encounter it, to revenge the death of his friends, and the poet artfully at the same time makes that goddess launch out into the praise of his intrepidity; a judicious method to exalt the character of his hero. Dacier.

v. 156. ——— *Cratæis gave to air*
This dreadful pest ———]

It is not very evident who this Cratæis is whom the poet makes the mother of Scylla: Eustathius informs us that it is Hecate, a goddess very properly recommended by Circe; she, like Circe, being the president over sorceries and enchantments. But why should she be said to be the mother of Scylla? Dacier imagines that Homer speaks ænigmatically, and intends to teach us that these monsters are merely the creation or offspring of magic, or poetry.

v. 161. *Where graze thy herds* ———] This fiction concerning the immortal herds of Apollo is bold, but founded upon truth

Sev'n herds, sev'n flocks enrich the sacred plains,
 Each herd, each flock full fifty heads contains;
 The wond'rous kind a length of age survey,
 By breed increase not, nor by death decay. 165
 Two sister goddesses possess the plain,
 The constant guardians of the woolly train;
 Lampetie fair, and Phaethusa young,
 From Phœbus and the bright Næara sprung:
 Here watchful o'er the flocks, in shady bow'rs 170
 And flow'ry meads they waste the joyous hours.
 Rob not the god! and so propitious gales
 Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails;
 But if thy impious hands the flocks destroy,
 The gods, the gods avenge it, and ye die! 175
 'Tis thine alone (thy friends and navy lost)
 Thro' tedious toils to view thy native coast.
 She ceas'd: and now arose the morning ray;
 Swift to her dome the goddess held her way.

and reality. Nothing is more certain than that in ancient times whole herds of cattle were consecrated to the gods, and were therefore sacred and inviolable: these being always of a fixed number, neither more nor less than at the first consecration, the poet feigns that they never bred or increased: and being constantly supplied upon any vacancy, they were fabled to be immortal, or never to decay; (for the same cause one of the most famous legends of antiquity was called immortal.) Eustathius informs us, that they were labouring oxen employed in tillage, and that it was esteemed a particular profanation to destroy a labouring ox: it was criminal to eat of it, nay it was forbid to be offered even in sacrifices to the gods, and a crime punishable with death by the laws of Solon. So that the moral intended by Homer in this fable of the violation of the herds of Apollo is, that in our utmost necessity we ought not to offend the gods. As to the flocks of sheep, Herodotus informs us, that in Apollonia along the Ionian gulf, flocks of sheep were consecrated to that deity, and were therefore inviolable.

v. 179. *Swift to her dome the goddess held her way.*] It is very judicious in the poet not to amuse us with repeating the compliments that passed between these two lovers at parting: the commerce Ulysses held with Circe was so far from contributing to the end of the Odyssey, that it was one of the greatest impediments

Then to my mates I measur'd back the plain, 180
 Climb'd the tall bark, and rush'd into the main;
 Then bending to the stroke, their oars they drew
 To their broad breasts, and swift the galley flew.
 Up-sprung a brisker breeze; with freshning gales
 The friendly goddesses stretch'd the swelling sails; 185
 We drop our oars; at ease the pilot guides;
 The vessel light along the level glides.
 When rising sad and slow, with pensive look,
 Thus to the melancholy train I spoke:

O friends, oh ever partners of my woes, 190
 Attend while I what heav'n foredooms disclose,
 Hear all! Fate hangs o'er all! on you it lies
 To live, or perish! to be safe, be wise!

In flow'ry meads the sportive Sirens play,
 Touch the soft lyre, and tune the vocal lay; 195
 Me, me alone, with fetters firmly bound,
 The gods allow to hear the dang'rous sound.
 Hear and obey: if freedom I demand,
 Be ev'ry fetter strain'd, be added band to band.

While yet I speak the winged galley flies, 200
 And lo! the Siren shores like mists arise.
 Sunk were at once the winds; the air above,
 And waves below, at once forgot to move!
 Some dæmon calm'd the air, and smooch'd the deep,
 Hush'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to sleep.

to it; and therefore Homer dismisses that subject in a few words, and passes on directly to the great sufferings and adventures of his hero, which are essential to the poem. But it may not be unnecessary to observe how artfully the poet connects this episode of Circe with the thread of it; he makes even the goddess who detains him from his country contribute to his return thither, by the advice she gives him how to escape the dangers of the ocean, and how to behave in the difficult emergencies of his voyages: it is true she detains him out of fondness, but yet this very fondness is of use to him, since it makes a goddess his instructor, and as it were a guide to his country.

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Now ev'ry sail we furl, each oar we ply; 206

Last'd by the stroke the frothy waters fly.

The ductile wax with busy hands I mould,

And cleft in fragments, and the fragments roll'd;

Th' aerial region now grew warm with day, 210

The wax dissolv'd beneath the burning ray;

Then ev'ry ear I barr'd against the strain,

And from excess of phrenzy lock'd the brain.

Now round the mast my mates the fetters roll'd,

And bound me limb by limb, with fold on fold. 215

Then bending to the stroke, the active train

Plunge all at once their oars, and cleave the main.

While to the shore the rapid vessel flies,

Our swift approach the Siren quire descries;

Celestial music warbles from their tongue, 220

And thus the sweet deluders tune the song.

O stay, oh pride of Greece! Ulysses stay!

O cease thy course, and listen to our lay!

v. 222. *O stay, oh pride of Greece! Ulysses stay!*] There are several things remarkable in this short song of the Sirens: one of the first words they speak is the name of Ulysses, this shews that they had a kind of omniscience; and it could not fail of raising the curiosity of a wise man, to be acquainted with persons of such extensive knowledge: the song is well adapted to the character of Ulysses: it is not pleasure or dalliance with which they tempt that hero, but a promise of wisdom, and a recital of the war of Troy and his own glory. Cicero was so pleased with these verses, that he translated them, lib. v. De Finibus Bon. & Mal.

“ O decus Argolicum, quin puppim flectis Ulysses,

“ Auribus ut nostros possis agnoscere cantus?

“ Nam nemo hæc unquam est transvectus cæcula cursu,

“ Quin prius adfiterit vocum dulcedine captus;

“ Post, variis avido satiatus pectore musis,

“ Doctior ad patrias lapsus pervenerit oras.

“ Nos grave certamen belli, clademque tenemus

“ Græcia quam Trojæ divino numine vexit,

“ Omniaque elatis rerum vestigia terris.”

Homer saw (says Tully) that his fable could not be approved, if he made his hero to be taken with a mere song: the Sirens therefore promise knowledge, the desire of which might probably prove

Blest is the man ordain'd our voice to hear,
 The song instructs the soul, and charms the ear. 225
 Approach! thy soul shall into raptures rise!
 Approach! and learn new wisdom from the wife!
 We know whate'er the kings of mighty name
 Atchiev'd at Ilion in the field of fame;
 Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies. 230
 O stay and learn new wisdom from the wife!

Thus the sweet charmers warbled o'er the main;
 My soul takes wing to meet the heav'nly strain;
 I give the sign, and struggle to be free:
 Swift row my mates, and shoot along the sea; 235
 New chains they add, and rapid urge the way,
 'Till dying off, the distant sounds decay:
 Then scudding swiftly from the dang'rous ground,
 The deafen'd ear unlock'd, the chains unbound.

Now all at once tremendous scenes unfold; 240
 Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd!

Stronger than the love of his country: to desire to know all things, whether useful or trifles, is a faulty curiosity; but to be led from the contemplation of things great and noble, to a thirst of knowledge, is an instance of a greatness of soul.

v. 241. ——— *the smoking billows roll'd.* What is to be understood by the smoke of the billows? Does the poet mean a real fire arising from the rocks? Most of the critics have judged that the rock vomited out flames; for Homer mentions in the beginning of this book,

———— Πυρρὸς τ' ὀλοοῖτο Σέλλαται.

I have taken the liberty to translate both these passages in a different sense; by the smoke I understand the mists that arise from the commotion and dashing of the waters, and by the "storms of fire," (as Homer expresses it) the reflexions the water casts in such agitations that resemble flames; thus in storms literally

" ——— Ardescunt ignibus undæ."

Scylla and Charybdis are in a continual storm, and may therefore be said to emit flames. I have softened the expression in the translation by inserting the word "seem."

Ulysses continues upon one of these rocks several hours; that is, from morning till noon, as appears from the conclusion of this

Tumultuous waves embroil'd the bellowing flood,
 All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood!
 No more the vessel plough'd the dreadful wave,
 Fear seiz'd the mighty, and unnerv'd the brave; 245
 Each dropp'd his oar: but swift from man to man
 With look serene I turn'd, and thus began.
 O friends! oh often try'd in adverse storms!
 With ills familiar in more dreadful forms!
 Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay, 250
 Yet safe return'd — Ulysses led the way.

book; for leaping from the float, he laid hold upon a fig-tree that grew upon Charybdis; but both the fig-tree and Ulysses must have been consumed, if the rock had really emitted flames.

v. 250. *Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay,
 Yet safe return'd — Ulysses led the way.]*

Plutarch excellently explains this passage in his dissertation, How a man may praise himself without blame or envy: "Ulysses (says that author) speaks not out of vanity; he saw his companions terrified with the noise, tumult, and smoke of the gulfs of Scylla and Charybdis; he therefore to give them courage, re-minds them of his wisdom and valour, which they found had frequently extricated them from other dangers; this is not vain-glory or boasting, but the dictate of wisdom; to infuse courage into his friends, he engages his virtue, prowess and capacity for their safety, and shews what confidence they ought to repose in his conduct." Virgil puts the words of Ulysses in the mouth of Æneas.

"O focii, neque enim ignari sumus ante malorum,
 "O passi graviora; dabit deus his quoque finem.
 "Vos & Scyllæam rabiem penitusque sonantes
 "Accessitis scopulos: vos & Cyclopea saxa
 "Experti, revocate animos, mœstumque timorem
 "Mittite. Forfan & hæc olim meminisse juvabit."

It must be allowed, that Virgil has improved what he borrows; it tends more to confirm the courage of his friends than what Ulysses speaks: Macrobius is of this opinion; Saturn. lib. v. cap. 11. Ulysses lays before his companions only one instance of his conduct in escaping dangers, Æneas mentions a second: there is something more strong in

"—— Forfan & hæc olim meminisse juvabit,"

than in ἡ περ τῶν μνήσεσθαι δέω; not only as it gives them hope to escape, but as it is an assurance that this very danger shall be

Learn courage hence! and in my care confide:
 Lo! still the same Ulysses is your guide!
 Attend my words! your oars incessant ply;
 Strain ev'ry nerve, and bid the vessel fly. 255
 If from yon' jostling rocks and wavy war
 Jove safety grants; he grants it to your care.
 And thou whose guiding hand directs our way,
 Pilot, attentive listen and obey! 259
 Bear wide thy course, nor plough those angry waves
 Where rolls yon' smoke, yon' tumbling ocean raves;
 Steer by the higher rock; lest whirl'd around
 We sink, beneath the circling eddy drown'd.

While yet I speak, at once their oars they seize,
 Stretch to the stroke, and brush the working seas. 265
 Cautious the name of Scylla I suppress;
 That dreadful sound had chill'd the boldest breast.

Meantime forgetful of the voice divine,
 All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine;

a pleasure, and add to their future happiness: it is not only an argument of resolution but consolation. Scaliger agrees with Macrobius, "Ex ipsis periculis proponit voluptatem: nihil enim jucundius eâ memoriâ quæ periculorum evasionem, victoriamque recordatione repræsentat."

v. 268. — *forgetful of the voice divine,
 All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine.]*

This seemingly small circumstance is not without a good effect: it shews that Ulysses even by the injunction of a goddess, cannot lay aside the hero. It is not out of a particular care of his own safety that he arms himself, for he takes his stand in the most open and dangerous part of the vessel. It is an evidence likewise that the death of his companions is not owing to a want of his protection; for it is plain that, as Horace expresses it,

"Dum sibi, dum sociis reditum parat, aspera multa
 Pertulit" —

By this conduct we see likewise, that all the parts of the Odyssey are consistent, and that the same care of his companions, which Homer ascribes to Ulysses in the first lines of it, is visible through the whole poem.

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High on the deck I take my dang'rous stand, 270
Two glitt'ring jav'lins lighten in my hand;
Prepar'd to whirl the whizzing spear I stay,
'Till the fell fiend arise to seize her prey.
Around the dungeon, studious to behold
The hideous pest, my labouring eyes I roll'd; 275
In vain! the dismal dungeon dark as night
Veils the dire monster, and confounds the fight.

Now thro' the rocks, appal'd with deep dismay,
We bend our course, and stem the desp'rate way;
Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms, 280
And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms.
When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves
The rough rock roars; tumultuous boils the waves;
They toss, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze; 285
Eternal mists obscure th' aerial plain,
And high above the rock she spouts the main;
When in her gulfs the rushing sea subsides,
She drains the ocean with the reflux tides:
The rock rebellows with a thund'ring sound; 290
Deep, wond'rous deep below, appears the ground.

Struck with despair, with trembling hearts we view'd
The yawning dungeon, and the tumbling flood;

v. 283. *The rough rock roars* ———] I doubt not every reader who is acquainted with Homer, has taken notice in this book, how he all along adapts his verses to the horrible subject he describes, and paints the roaring of the ocean in words as sonorous as that element. Δεινὸν ἀνεπρόσδινε—τῆς ἀναρῶδαι—ἀναρῶδαι—βίμηνεν, &c. "Subjicit rem oculis, & aurium nostrarum do—" minus est," says Scaliger. It is impossible to preserve the beauty of Homer, in a language so much inferior; but I have endeavoured to imitate what I could not equal. I have clogged the verse with the roughness and identity of a letter, which is the harshest our language affords; and clogged it with monosyllables, that the concurrence of the rough letters might be more quick and close in the pronunciation, and the most open and sounding vowel occur in every word.

When lo! fierce Scylla stoop'd to seize her prey,
 Stretch'd her dire jaws, and swept six men away; 295
 Chiefs of renown! loud echoing shrieks arise;
 I turn and view them quivering in the skies;
 They call, and aid with out-stretch'd arms implore:
 In vain they call! those arms are stretch'd no more.
 As from some rock that overhangs the floods, 300
 The silent fisher casts th' insidious food,
 With fraudulent care he waits the finny prize,
 And sudden lifts it quivering to the skies:
 So the foul monster lifts her prey on high,
 So pant the wretches struggling in the sky; 305
 In the wide dungeon she devours her food;
 And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.
 Worn as I am with griefs, with care decay'd;
 Never, I never, scene so dire survey'd!
 My shiv'ring blood, congeal'd, forgot to flow; 310
 Aghast I stood, a monument of woe!

Now from the rocks the rapid vessel flies,
 And the hoarse din like distant thunder dies;
 To Sol's bright isle our voyage we pursue,
 And now the glitt'ring mountains rise to view. 315
 There sacred to the radiant god of day,
 Graze the fair herds, the flocks promiscuous stray;
 Then suddenly was heard along the main
 To low the ox, to bleat the woolly train;

v. 300. *As from some rock that overhangs the flood,
 The silent fisher ———]*

These tender and calm similitudes have a peculiar beauty, when introduced to illustrate such images of terror as the poet here describes: they set off each the other by an happy contrast, and become both more strong by opposition. Eustathius remarks, that there is always a peculiar sweetness in allusions that are borrowed from calm life, as fishing, hunting, and rural affairs.

v. 314. *To Sol's bright isle ———]* This isle is evidently Sicily; for he has already informed us, that these herds were on Trinacria, (so antiently called from the three promontories of Lilybæum, Pelorus, and Pachynus.)

Straight to my anxious thoughts the sound convey'd
 The words of Circe and the Theban shade; 321
 Warn'd by their awful voice these shores to shun,
 With cautious fears oppress'd, I thus begun.

O friends! oh ever exercis'd in care!
 Hear heav'n's commands, and rev'rence what ye hear!
 To fly these shores the prescient Theban shade 326
 And Circe warns! O be their voice obey'd:
 Some mighty woe relentless heav'n forebodes:
 Fly these dire regions, and revere the gods!

While yet I spoke, a sudden sorrow ran 330
 Thro' ev'ry breast, and spread from man to man,
 'Till wrathful thus Eurylochus began. }

O cruel thou! some fury sure has steel'd
 That stubborn soul, by toil untaught to yield!
 From sleep debarr'd, we sink from woes to woes; 335
 And cruel, enviest thou a short repose?
 Still must we restless rove, new seas explore,
 The sun descending, and so near the shore?
 And lo! the night begins her gloomy reign,
 And doubles all the terrors of the main. 340
 Oft' in the dead of night loud winds arise,
 Lash the wild surge, and bluster in the skies;
 Oh should the fierce south-west his rage display,
 And toss with rising storms the wat'ry way,
 Tho' gods descend from heav'n's aerial plain 345
 To lend us aid, the gods descend in vain:
 Then while the night displays her awful shade,
 Sweet time of slumber! be the night obey'd!
 Haste ye to land! and when the morning ray
 Sheds her bright beams, pursue the destin'd way. 350

v. 332. 'Til *wrathful thus Eurylochus began.*] Homer has found out a way to turn reproach into praise. What Eurylochus speaks in his wrath against Ulysses as a fault, is really his glory; it shews him to be indefatigable, patient in adversity, and obedient to the decrees of the gods. And what still heightens the panegyric is, that it is spoken by an enemy, who must therefore be free from all suspicion of flattery. Dacier.

A sudden joy in ev'ry bosom rose;
So will'd some dæmon, minister of woes!

To whom with grief — O swift to be undone,
Constrain'd I act what wisdom bids me shun.
But yonder herds, and yonder flocks forbear; 355
Attest the heav'ns, and call the gods to hear:
Content, an innocent repast display,
By Circe giv'n, and fly the dang'rous prey.

Thus I: and while to shore the vessel flies,
With hands uplifted they attest the skies: 360
Then where a fountain's gurgling waters play,
They rush to land, and end in feasts the day:
They feed; they quaff; and now (their hunger fled)
Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the dead.
Nor cease the tears, 'till each in slumber shares 365
A sweet forgetfulness of human cares.

Now far the night advanc'd her gloomy reign,
And setting stars roll'd down the azure plain:
When, at the voice of Jove, wild whirlwinds rise,
And clouds and double darkness veil the skies; 370

v. 363. ——— *And now (their hunger fled)*
Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the dead.]

This conduct may seem somewhat extraordinary; the companions of Ulysses appear to have forgot their lost friends, they entertain themselves with a due refreshment, and then find leisure to mourn; whereas a true sorrow would more probably have taken away all appetite. But the practice of Ulysses's friends is consonant to the customs of antiquity: it was esteemed a profanation and a piece of ingratitude to the gods, to mix sorrow with their entertainments: the hours of repast were allotted to joy, and thanksgiving to heaven for the bounty it gave to man by sustenance. Besides, this practice bears a secret instruction, viz. that the principal care is owing to the living; and when that is over, the dead are not to be neglected. Æneas and his friends are drawn in the same attitude by Virgil:

“ Postquam exempta fames epulis, mensæque remotæ,
“ Amissos longo focios sermone requirunt;
“ Præcipuè pius Æneas, nunc acris Oronti,
“ Nunc Amyci casum gemit, &c.”

The moon, the stars, the bright æth'ral host
 Seem as extinct, and all their splendours lost;
 The furious tempest roars with dreadful sound:
 Air thunders, rolls the ocean, groans the ground.
 All night it rag'd; when morning rose, to land 375
 We haul'd our bark, and moor'd it on the strand,
 Where in a beauteous grotto's cool recess
 Dance the green Nereids of the neighb'ring seas.

There while the wild winds whistled o'er the main,
 Thus careful I address the list'ning train. 380

O friends be wise! nor dare the flocks destroy
 Of these fair pastures: if ye touch, ye die.
 Warn'd by the high command of heav'n, be aw'd;
 Holy the flocks, and dreadful is the god!
 That god who spreads the radiant beams of light, 385
 And views wide earth and heav'n's unmeasur'd height.

And now the moon had run her monthly round,
 The south-east blust'ring with a dreadful sound;
 Unhurt the bees, untouch'd the woolly train
 Low thro' the grove, or range the flow'ry plain: 390
 Then fail'd our food; then fish we make our prey,
 Or fowl that screaming haunt the wat'ry way.
 'Till now from sea or flood no succour found,
 Famine and meagre want besieg'd us round.
 Penfive and pale from grove to grove I stray'd, 395
 From the loud storms to find a silvan shade;

v. 395. *Penfive and pale from grove to grove I stray'd.*] It was necessary (remarks Eustathius) for the poet to invent some pretext to remove Ulysses: if he had been present, his companions dared not to have disobeyed him openly; or if they had, it would have shewed a want of authority, which would have been a disparagement to that hero. Now what pretext could be more rational than to suppose him withdrawn to offer up his devotions to the gods? His affairs are brought to the utmost extremity, his companions murmur, and hunger oppresses. The poet therefore, to bring about the crime of these offenders by probable methods, represents Ulysses retiring to supplicate the gods; a conduct which they ought to have imitated: besides, there is a poetical justice observed in

There o'er my hands the living wave I pour;
 And heav'n and heav'n's immortal thrones adore,
 To calm the roarings of the stormy main,
 And grant me peaceful to my realms again. 400
 Then o'er my eyes the gods soft slumber shed,
 While thus Eurylochus arising said.

O friends, a thousand ways frail mortals lead
 To the cold tomb, and dreadful all to tread;
 But dreadful most, when by a slow decay 405
 Pale hunger wastes the manly strength away.
 Why cease ye then t' implore the pow'rs above,
 And offer hecatombs to thund'ring Jove?
 Why seize ye not yon' beeves, and fleecy prey?
 Arise unanimous; arise and slay! 410
 And if the gods ordain a safe return,
 To Phœbus shrines shall rise, and altars burn.
 But should the pow'rs that o'er mankind preside,
 Decree to plunge us in the whelming tide,
 Better to rush at once to shades below, 415
 Than linger life away, and nourish woe!

the whole relation, and by the piety of Ulysses, and the guilt of his companions, we acknowledge the equity when we see them perish, and Ulysses preserved from all his dangers.

v. 412. *To Phœbus shrines shall rise,* —] Eurylochus puts on an air of piety to persuade his companions to commit sacrilege: "Let us sacrifice, says he, to the gods:" as if obedience were not better than sacrifice. Homer understood the nature of man, which is studious to find excuses to justify our crimes; and we often offend, merely through hopes of a pardon. Dacier.

The word in the original is ἀγάλματα, which does not signify statues, but ornaments, ἀναθήματα, hung up, or repositied in the temples; such as

— 'Αγλαίης ἔνεκα κομόωσιν ἀνακλεις,
 or as it is expressed in the Iliad,

— Βασιλῆι κεῖται ἄγαλμα.

Hesychius interprets ἄγαλμα to be, πᾶν ἐφ' ᾧ τις ἀγάλλεται, ἢ ὡς ζυνηθεία ζῶανον; that is, ἄγαλμα signifies every ornament with which a person is delighted or adorned; not a statue, as it is understood by the generality. Dacier. Eustathius.

Thus he: the beeves around securely stray,
 When swift to ruin they invade the prey;
 They seize, they kill!—but for the rite divine,
 The barley fail'd, and for libations, wine. 420 —
 Swift from the oak they strip the shady pride;
 And verdant leaves the flow'ry cake supply'd.

With pray'r they now address th' ætherial train,
 Slay the selected beeves, and slay the slain:
 The thighs, with fat involv'd, divide with art, 425
 Strew'd o'er with morsels cut from ev'ry part.
 Water, instead of wine, is brought in urns,
 And pour'd profanely as the victim burns.
 The thighs thus offer'd, and the entrails dress'd,
 They roast the fragments, and prepare the feast. 430

'Twas then soft slumber fled my troubled brain;
 Back to the bark I speed along the main.
 When lo! an odour from the feast exhales,
 Spreads o'er the coast, and scents the tainted gales;
 A chilly fear congeal'd my vital blood, 435
 And thus obtesting heav'n I mourn'd aloud.

O fire of men and gods, immortal Jove!
 Oh all ye blissful pow'rs that reign above!
 Why were my cares beguil'd in short repose?
 O fatal slumber, paid with lasting woes! 440
 A deed so dreadful all the gods alarms,
 Vengeance is on the wing, and heav'n in arms!

Meantime Lampetie mounts th' aerial way,
 And kindles into rage the god of day:
 Vengeance ye pow'rs, (he cries) and thou whose hand
 Aims the red bolt, and hurls the writhen brand! 446
 Slain are those herds which I with pride survey,
 When thro' the ports of heav'n I pour the day, }
 Or deep in ocean plunge the burning ray.
 Vengeance, ye gods! or I the skies forego, 450
 And bear the lamp of heav'n to shades below.

v. 451. *And bear the lamp of heav'n to shades below.*] This is a very bold fiction; for how can the sun be imagined to illuminate

To whom the thund'ring pow'r: O source of day!
 Whose radiant lamp adorns the azure way,
 Still may thy beams thro' heav'n's bright portals rise,
 The joy of earth, and glory of the skies; 455
 Lo! my red arm I bare, my thunders guide,
 To dash th' offenders in the whelming tide.

To fair Calypso from the bright abodes,
 Hermes convey'd these councils of the gods.

the regions of the dead; that is, to shine within the earth, for there the realm of Pluto is placed by Homer? I am persuaded the meaning is only that he would no more rise, but leave the earth and heavens in perpetual darkness. Erebus is placed in the west, where the sun sets, and consequently when he disappears, he may be said to be sunk into the realms of darkness, or Erebus.

Perhaps the whole fiction might be founded really upon the observation of some unusual darkness of the sun, either from a total eclipse or other causes, which happened at a time when some remarkable crime was committed, and gave the poets liberty to feign that the sun withdrew his light from the view of it. Thus at the death of Cæsar the globe of the sun was obscured, or gave but a weak light, (says Plutarch) a whole year: and Pliny, lib. ii. So. "Fiunt prodigiosi & longiores solis defectus, totius pænè anni pallore continuo." This Virgil directly applies to the horror the sun conceived at the death of Cæsar, Georg. i.

"Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cæsare Romam,
 "Cum caput obscurâ nitidum ferrugine texit,
 "Impiaque æternam timerunt secula noctem."

And if Virgil might say that the sun withdrew his beams at the impiety of the Romans, why may not Homer say the same, concerning the crime of the companions of Ulysses? Dacier imagines that Homer had heard of the sun's standing still at the voice of Joshua; for if (says she) he could stand still in the upper region, why may not he do the same in the contrary hemisphere, that is, in the language of Homer, "bear his lamps to shades below?" But this seems to be spoken without any foundation, there being no occasion to have recourse to that miraculous event for a solution.

v. 458. *To fair Calypso from the bright abodes,
 Hermes convey'd these councils of the gods.]*

These lines are inserted (as Eustathius observes) solely to reconcile the story to credibility; for how was it possible for Ulysses to arrive at the knowledge of what was done in heaven, without a discovery made by some of the deities? The persons by whom these

Meantime from man to man my tongue exclaims,
 My wrath is kindled, and my soul in flames. 461
 In vain! I view perform'd the direful deed,
 Beeves, slain by heaps, along the ocean bleed.

Now heav'n gave signs of wrath, along the ground }
 Crept the raw hides, and with a bellowing sound 465 }
 Roar'd the dead limbs; the burning entrails groan'd. }

discourses of the gods are discovered are happily chosen; Mercury was the messenger of heaven, and it is this god who descends to Calypso in the fifth book of the *Odyssey*: so that there was a correspondence between Calypso and Mercury; and therefore he is a proper person to make this discovery to that goddess, and she, out of affection to Ulysses.

v. 464. *Now heav'n gave signs of wrath; along the ground
 Crept the raw hides ————]*

This passage (says Eustathius) gave an occasion of laughter to men disposed to be merry, *Λάσας γελοιασμὸν δίδωκε τοῖς παιζειν ἐθέλουσι*. He adds, that the terrors of a guilty conscience drove the companions of Ulysses into these imaginations: guilt is able to create a phantom in a moment, so that these appearances were nothing but the illusions of a disturbed imagination. He cites a passage from the *Calliope* of Herodotus to vindicate Homer: Artayctes, a Persian general, had plundered a temple in which was the tomb of Proteusilaus, where great riches were deposited; afterwards he was besieged in Sestus, and taken prisoner: one day, one of his guards was boiling salted fishes (*τάριχοι*) and they leaped, and moved as if they had been alive, and newly taken out of the water: divers persons crowded about the place, and wondered at the miracle; when Artayctes said, "Friends, you are not at all concerned in this miracle: Proteusilaus, though dead, admonishes me by this sign, that the gods have given him power to revenge the injury I offered to his monument in Eleus." But this is justifying one fable by another; and this looks also like the effects of a guilty conscience.

This is not among the passages condemned by Longinus; and indeed it was no way blameable, if we consider the times when it was spoken, and the persons to whom it is related: I mean Phæacians, who were delighted with such wonders. What was said injudiciously by a great writer, may very properly be applied to these people, "*Credo, quia impossibile est.*" But we need not have recourse to their credulity for a vindication of this story: Homer has given us an account of all the abstruse arts, such as necromancy, witchcraft, and natural portents; here he relates a prodigy, the belief of which universally prevailed among the an-

Six guilty days my wretched mates employ
 In impious feasting, and unhallow'd joy;
 The seventh arose, and now the fire of gods
 Rein'd the rough storms, and calm'd the tossing floods:
 With speed the bark we climb; the spacious sails 471
 Loos'd from the yards invite th' impelling gales.
 Past sight of shore, along the surge we bound,
 And all above is sky, and ocean all around!
 When lo! a murky cloud the thund'rer forms 475
 Full o'er our heads, and blackens heav'n with storms.
 Night dwells o'er all the deep: and now out flies
 The gloomy west, and whistles in the skies.

tients: let any one read Livy, and he will find innumerable instances of prodigies, equally incredible as this, which were related by the wise, and believed at least by the vulgar. Thus we read of speaking oxen, the sweating of the statues of the gods, in the best Roman histories. If such wonders might have a place in history, they may certainly be allowed room in poetry, whose province is fable: it signifies nothing whether a story be true or false, provided it be established by common belief, or common fame; this is a sufficient foundation for poetry. Virgil, Georg. i. 478.

“ ————— Pecudesque locutæ,
 “ Infandum! sistunt amnes, &c.”

The days of wonder are now over, and therefore a poet would be blameable to make use of such impossibilities in these ages: they are now almost universally disbelieved, and therefore would not be approved as bold fictions, but exploded as wild extravagancies.

v. 477. ————— and now out flies
The gloomy west, &c.]

Longinus, while he condemns the Odyssey as wanting fire, through the decay of Homer's fancy, excepts the descriptions of the tempests, which he allows to be painted with the boldest and strongest strokes of poetry. Let any person read that passage in the fifth book, and he will be convinced of the fire of Homer's fancy.

ὧς εἰπὼν ὕνασεν νεφέλας, ἐτάραξε δὲ πόντον,
 Χερσὶ τρῖαιναν ἔλων, πάσας δ' ὀρόθυενεν ἀέλλας
 Παντοίων ἀνέμων, ὧν δὲ νεφέεσσι κάλυψε
 Γαῖαν ὁμῶ καὶ πόντον· ὀρώρει δ' ἐρανόθεν νύξ.

The two last lines are here repeated; and Scaliger, a second Zoilus of Homer, allows them to be “ omnia pulchra, plena, gravia,”

The mountain-billows roar! the furious blast
 Howls o'er the shroud, and rends it from the mast:
 The mast gives way, and crackling as it bends, 481
 Tears up the deck; then all at once descends:
 The pilot by the tumbling ruin slain,
 Dash'd from the helm, falls headlong in the main.

p. 469. There is a storm in the very words, and the horrors of it are visible in the verses.

Virgil was master of too much judgment, not to embellish his *Æneid* with this description,

“ Incubuerē mari, totumque a sedibus imis
 “ Unā Eurūque Notūque ruunt, creberque procellis
 “ Africus, & vastos volvunt ad littora fluctus,
 “ Eripiunt subito nubes cælumque diemque
 “ Teucrorum ex oculis: ponto nox incubat atra.”

These are almost literally translated from the abovementioned verses of Homer, and these following.

Σὺν δ' Εὐρύ τε Νότῳ τ' ἔπεισι, Ζεφυρός τε δυσαῆς
 Καὶ Βορέης αἰθρηγενέτης, μέγα κῦμα κυλίνδων.

Scaliger calls the verses of Homer, “ divina oratio,” but prefers those of Virgil. “ Totumque a sedibus imis,” is stronger than ἐτάραξε πόντον, &c. and αἰθρηγενέτης is an ill chosen epithet, to be used to describe a storm, for it carries an image of serenity. But that is to be understood of the general nature of that wind: as a river may be said to be gentle, though capable to be swelled into a flood. But I leave the preference to the reader's judgment.

v. 483. *The pilot by the tumbling ruin slain.*] There is a great similitude between this passage and some verses in Virgil, in which, as Scaliger judges, and perhaps with reason, the preference is to be given to the Roman poet. “ Tenuissimâ, says that critic, & “ levissimâ utitur narratione Homerus.

Πλῆξε κυβερνήτην κεφαλῇ, Σὺν δ' ὄρεια ἄραξε
 Πάντ' ἄμυδις κεφαλῆς, ὃ δ' ἀρνευτῆρι εἰκῶς
 Κάππεσι.

And again,

—— πρῶτον δ' ἐκ νηὸς ἑταῖροι.
 Ὅι δὲ κορώνησιν ἱκέλοι περὶ νῆα μέλαιναν
 Κύμασιν ἐμφορέοντο.

“ ——— Ingens a vertice Pontus
 “ In puppim ferit; excutitur, pronusque magister
 “ Volvitur in caput.”

Then Jove in anger bids his thunders roll, 485
 And forky lightnings flash from pole to pole;
 Fierce at our heads his deadly bolt he aims,
 Red with uncommon wrath, and wrapt in flames:
 Full on the bark it fell; now high, now low,
 Toss'd and retoss'd, it reel'd beneath the blow; 490
 At once into the main the crew it shook:
 Sulphureous odours rose, and smould'ring smoke.
 Like fowl that haunt the floods, they sink, they rise,
 Now lost, now seen, with shrieks and dreadful cries; }
 And strive to gain the bark; but Jove denies. 495 }
 Firm at the helm I stand, when fierce the main
 Rush'd with dire noise, and dash'd the sides in twain;
 Again impetuous drove the furious blast,
 Snapt the strong helm, and bore to sea the mast.
 Firm to the mast with cords the helm I bind, 500 }
 And ride aloft, to providence resign'd, }
 Thro' tumbling billows, and a war of wind.

Now sunk the west, and now a southern breeze
 More dreadful than the tempest, lash'd the seas;
 For on the rocks it bore where Scylla raves, 505
 And dire Charybdis rolls her thund'ring waves.
 All night I drove; and, at the dawn of day,
 Fast by the rocks beheld the desp'rate way:
 Just when the sea within her gulfs subsides,
 And in the roaring whirlpools rush the tides. 510

" ———— Ast illam ter fluctus ibidem

" Torquet agens circum, & rapidus vorat æquore vortex

" Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto."

There is certainly better versification in these lines of Virgil, than in those of Homer: there is better colouring, and they set the thing they describe full before our eyes. Virgil has omitted the two short similitudes of the diver, and the sea-mews, despairing perhaps to make them shine in the Roman language. There is a third simile in Homer of the bat or bird of night *Núktēpis*, which is introduced to represent Ulysses clinging round the fig-tree. It is true the whole three are taken from low subjects, but they very well paint the thing they were intended to illustrate.

Swift from the float I vaulted with a bound,
 The lofty fig-tree seiz'd, and clung around :
 So to the beam the bat tenacious clings,
 And pendent round it clasps his leathern wings.
 High in the air the tree its boughs display'd, 515
 And o'er the dungeon cast a dreadful shade,
 All unsustain'd between the wave and sky,
 Beneath my feet the whirling billows fly.
 What-time the judge forsakes the noisy bar
 'To take repast, and stills the wordy war; 520

v. 519. *What-time the judge forsakes the noisy bar
 To take repast ———]*

This passage has been egregiously misunderstood by Monsieur Perrault. Ulysses being carried (says that author) on his mast towards Charybdis, leaps from it, and clings like a bat round a fig-tree, waiting till the return of the mast from the gulfs of it; and adds, that when he saw it, he was as glad as a judge when he rises from his seat to go to dinner, after having tried several causes. But Boileau fully vindicates Homer in his reflections on Longinus: before the use of dials or clocks the antients distinguished the day by some remarkable offices or stated employments: as from the dining of the labourer.

————— What-time in some sequester'd vale
 The weary woodman spreads his sparing meal.

Iliad xi. ver. 119. See the annotations; so here from the rising of the judges: and both denote the mid-day, or noon-tide hour. Thus it is used by Hippocrates, who speaking of a person wounded with a javelin in the liver, says he died *πριν ἀγορὴν λυθῆναι*, a little before the breaking up of the assembly, or before the judge rises from his tribunal: or as some understand it, a little before the finishing of the market: there is a parallel expression in Xenophon, *ἡ ἡδὲ τε ἀμφὶ ἀγορὰν πλῆθυσαν*. This rising of the judge Perrault mistakes for a comparison, to express the joy which Ulysses conceived at the sight of the return of his mast; than which nothing can be more distant from Homer's sentiment.

From this description we may precisely learn the time that passed while Ulysses clung round the fig-tree.

————— At the dawn of day,
 Fast by the rocks I plough'd the desp'rate way.

So that at morning he leaped from his float, and about noon recovered it: now Eustathius affirms, that in the space of twenty-

Charybdis rumbling from her inmost caves,
 The mast refunded on her reflux waves.
 Swift from the tree, the floating mast to gain,
 Sudden I dropp'd amidst the flashing main;
 Once more undaunted on the ruin rode, 525
 And oar'd with lab'ring arms along the flood.
 Unseen I pass'd by Scylla's dire abodes:
 So Jove decreed, (dread fire of men and gods)
 Then nine long days I plough'd the calmer seas,
 Heav'd by the surge, and wafted by the breeze. 530
 Weary and wet th' Ogygian shores I gain,
 When the tenth sun descended to the main.

four hours there are three tides, and dividing that time into three parts, Ulysses will appear to have remained upon the rock eight hours. The exact time when the judge rose from his tribunal is not apparent: Boileau supposes it to be about three o'clock in the afternoon, Dacier about two; but the time was certain among the ancients, and is only dubious to us, as we are ignorant of the hour of the day when the judge entered his tribunal, and when he left it.

v. 532. *When the tenth sun descended to the main.*] This account is very extraordinary. Ulysses continued upon the mast ten days, and consequently ten days without any nourishment. Longinus brings this passage as an instance of the decay of Homer's genius, and his lanching out into extravagant fables. I wonder Eustathius should be silent about this objection; but Dacier endeavours to vindicate Homer, from a similar place in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xxvii. ver. 33. where St Paul says to the sailors, "This is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued fasting, having taken nothing." Now if the sailors in the Acts could fast fourteen days, why may not Ulysses fast ten? But this place by no means comes up to the point. The words are *ἡμετέραν ἡμέραν ὡρεδοκίμης*, that is, expecting the fourteenth day, (which is to-day) you continue without eating; so the meaning is, they had taken no food all that day; the danger was so great that they had no leisure to think upon hunger. This is the literal construction of the words, and implies that out of expectation of the fourteenth day, (which they looked upon as a critical time when the danger would be at the highest) they had forgot to take their usual repast; and not, that they had fasted fourteen days. But if any person thinks that the fasting is to be applied to the whole fourteen days, it must be in that latitude wherein interpreters expound Hesiod.

There in Calypso's ever-fragrant bow'rs
Refresh'd I lay, and joy beguil'd the hours.

My following fates to thee, oh king, are known,
And the bright partner of thy royal throne. 336
Enough: in misery can words avail?
And what so tedious as a twice-told tale?

ὅδ' ἔτι σῖτον
ἥσθιον

which signifies not that they eat no meat at all, but that they had not leisure through their danger to observe the usual and stated hours of repast: they eat in their arms, with their hands fouled with blood. But I take the former sense to be the better. Besides, it is impossible to make this place of any service to Homer; for if these men continued so long fasting, it was a miraculous fast; and how can this be applied to Ulysses, who is not imagined to owe his power of fasting to any supernatural assistance? But it is almost a demonstration that the sailors in the Acts eat during the tempest: why should they abstain? It was not for want of food; for at St. Paul's injunction they take some sustenance: now it is absurd to imagine a miracle to be performed, when common and easy means were at hand to make such a supernatural act unnecessary. If they had been without food, then indeed a miracle might have been supposed to supply it. If they had died through fasting, when meat was at hand, they would have been guilty of starving themselves. If therefore we suppose a miracle, we must suppose it to be wrought, to prevent men from being guilty of wilful self-murder, which is an absurdity.

Besides, the word *ἀσιλος* is used to denote a person who takes no food for the space of one day only, as *μονόσιλος* signifies a person who eats but one meal in the compass of one day; this therefore is an evidence, that the sailors in the Acts had not been without sustenance fourteen days.

In short, I am not in the number of those who think Homer has no faults; and unless we imagine Ulysses to have fasted ten days by the assistance of the gods, this passage must be allowed to be extravagant: it is true, Homer says, the gods guided him to the Ogygian shores; but he says not a word to soften the incredibility of the fasting of Ulysses, through an assistance of the gods. I am therefore inclined to subscribe to the opinion of Longinus, that this relation is faulty; but say with Horace,

“ ——— Non ego paucis

“ Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,

“ Aut humana parum cavit natura.”

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K XIII.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The arrival of Ulysses in Ithaca.

Ulysses takes his leave of Alcinous and Arete, and embarks in the evening. Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca; where the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him on the shore with all his treasures. On their return, Neptune changes their ship into a rock. In the mean-time Ulysses awaking, knows not his native Ithaca, by reason of a mist which Pallas had cast round him. He breaks into loud lamentations; 'till the goddess appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, discovers the country to him, and points out the particular places. He then tells a feigned story of his adventures, upon which she manifests herself, and they consult together of the measures to be taken to destroy the suitors. To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, she changes him into the figure of an old beggar.

HE ceas'd; but left so pleasing on their ear
His voice, that list'ning still they seem'd to hear.
A pause of silence hush'd the shady rooms:
The grateful conf'rence then the king resumes.

v. 3. — *The shady rooms.*] The epithet in the original is *οκλίεντα*, or "gloomy:" it is here used with a peculiar propriety, to keep in the reader's mind the exact time when Ulysses made his narration to the Phæacians, namely, in the evening, of the thirty-third day: we may likewise gather from this distinction of times, the exact stay of Ulysses among the Phæacians; he was thrown up—

Whatever toils the great Ulysses past, 5
 Beneath this happy roof they end at last ;
 No longer now from shore to shore to roam,
 Smooth seas, and gentle winds, invite him home.
 But hear me, princes ! whom these walls inclose,
 For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows 10
 With wine unmixt, (an honour due to age,
 To cheer the grave, and warm the poet's rage)
 Tho' labour'd gold and many a dazzling vest
 Lie heap'd already for our god-like guest ;
 Without new treasures let him not remove, 15
 Large, and expressive of the public love :
 Each peer a tripod, each a vase bestow,
 A gen'ral tribute, which the state shall owe.

This sentence pleas'd : then all their steps address
 To sep'rate mansions, and retir'd to rest. 20

Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
 And shed her sacred light along the skies.
 Down to the haven and the ships in haste
 They bore the treasures, and in safety plac'd.
 The king himself the vases rang'd with care : 25
 Then bade his followers to the feast repair.

on their shores on the thirty-first day in the evening, and lands
 about day-break on the thirty-fifth day in his own country ; so
 that he stayed three nights only with Alcinous, one night being
 spent in his voyage to Ithaca from Phæacia.

*v. 10. For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows
 With wine unmixt, &c.]*

Homer calls the wine *γέγονον*, or wine drank at the entertainment
 of elders, *γέγονον*, or men of distinction, says Eustathius ; by the
 bard, he means Demodocus.

The same critic further remarks, that Homer judiciously short-
 ens every circumstance before he comes to the dismissal of Ulysses :
 thus he omits the description of the sacrifice, and the subject
 of the song of Demodocus ; these are circumstances that at best
 would be but useless ornaments, and ill agree with the impatience
 of Ulysses to begin his voyage toward his country. These therefore
 the poet briefly dispatches.

A victim ox beneath the sacred hand
 Of great Alcinous falls, and stains the sand.
 To Jove th' eternal, (pow'r above all pow'rs!
 Who wings the winds, and darkens heav'n with show'rs)
 The flames ascend : 'till evening they prolong 31
 The rites, more sacred made by heav'nly song :
 For in the midst, with public honours grac'd,
 Thy lyre divine, Demodocus ! was plac'd,
 All, but Ulysses, hear'd with fix'd delight : 35
 He sat, and ey'd the sun, and wish'd the night ;
 Slow seem'd the sun to move, the hours to roll,
 His native home deep imag'd in his soul.
 As the tir'd ploughman spent with stubborn toil,
 Whose oxen long have torn the furrow'd soil, 40
 Sees with delight the sun's declining ray,
 When home with feeble knees, he bends his way
 To late repast, (the day's hard labour done :)
 So to Ulysses welcome set the sun,

v. 39. *As the tir'd ploughman, &c.*] The simile which Homer chuses is drawn from low life, but very happily sets off the impatience of Ulysses : it is familiar, but expressive. Horace was not of the judgment of those who thought it mean, for he uses it in his epistles.

" ————— diesque

" Longa videtur opus debentibus : ut piger annus

" Pupillis, quos dura premit custodia matrum ;

" Sic mihi tarda fluunt, ingrataque tempora, quæ spem

" Consiliumque morantur," &c.

It was very necessary to dwell upon this impatience of Ulysses to return : it would have been absurd to have represented him cool, or even moderately warm upon this occasion ; he had refused immortality through the love of his country ; it is now in his power to return to it ; he ought therefore consistently with his former character to be drawn with the utmost earnestness of soul, and every moment must appear tedious that keeps him from it ; it shews therefore the judgment of Homer to describe him in this manner, and not to pass it over cursorily, but force it upon the notice of the reader, by insisting upon it somewhat largely, and illustrating it by a proper similitude, to fix it more strongly upon our memory.

Then instant, to Alcinous and the rest, 45
(The Scherian states) he turn'd, and thus address'd.

O thou, the first in merit and command!
And you the peers and princes of the land!
May ev'ry joy be yours! nor this the least,
When due libation shall have crown'd the feast, 50 }
Safe to my home to send your happy guest.

Compleat are now the bounties you have giv'n,
Be all those bounties but confirm'd by heav'n!
So may I find, when all my wand'rings cease,
My comfort blameless, and my friends in peace. 55

On you be ev'ry bliss; and ev'ry day,
In home-felt joys delighted, roll away;
Yourself, your wives, your long descending race,
May ev'ry god enrich with ev'ry grace!
Sure fixt on virtue may your nation stand, 60
And public evil never touch the land!

His words well weigh'd, the gen'ral voice approv'd
Benign, and instant his dismissal mov'd.
The monarch to Pontonous gave the sign,
To fill the goblet high with rosy wine: 65
Great Jove the father, first (he cry'd) implore;
Then send the stranger to his native shore.

The luscious wine th' obedient herald brought;
Around the mansion flow'd the purple draught:
Each from his seat to each immortal pours, 70
Whom glory circles in th' Olympian bow'rs.
Ulysses sole with air majestic stands,
The bowl presenting to Arete's hands;

v. 53. *Be all those bounties but confirm'd by heav'n!*] This is a pious and instructive sentence, and teaches, that though riches were heaped upon us with the greatest abundance and superfluity; yet unless heaven adds its benediction, they will prove but at best a burden and calamity.

v. 73. *The bowl presenting to Arete's hands;*
Then thus —————]

It may be asked why Ulysses addresses his words to the queen rather

Then thus : O queen farewell ! be still possess'd
Of dear remembrance, blessing still and blest !
'Till age and death shall gently call thee hence,
(Sure fate of ev'ry mortal excellence !)

75

Farewel ! and joys successive ever spring
To thee, to thine, the people, and the king !

Thus he ; then parting prints the sandy shore 80
To the fair port : a herald march'd before,
Sent by Alcinous : of Arete's train

Three chosen maids attend him to the main ;

This does a tunic and white vest convey,

A various casket that, of rich inlay,

85

And bread and wine the third. The chearful mates

Safe in the hollow poop dispose the cates :

Upon the deck, soft painted robes they spread,

With linen cover'd, for the hero's bed.

He climb'd the lofty stern ; then gently prest
The swelling couch, and lay compos'd to rest.

90

Now plac'd in order, the Phæacian train

Their cables loose, and lanch into the main :

At once they bend, and strike their equal oars,

And leave the sinking hills, and less'ning shores. 95

While on the deck the chief in silence lies,

And pleasing slumbers steal upon his eyes.

As fiery coursers in the rapid race

Urg'd by fierce drivers thro' the dusty space,

than the king : the reason is, because she was his patroness, and had first received him with hospitality, as appears from the seventh book of the *Odyssey*.

Ulysses makes a libation to the gods, and presents the bowl to the queen : this was the pious practice of antiquity upon all solemn occasions : Ulysses here does it, because he is to undertake a voyage, and it implies a prayer for the prosperity of it. The reason why he presents the bowl to the queen is, that she may first drink out of it, for so *προπίνειν* properly and originally signifies, τὸ πρὸ ἑαυτοῦ διδόναι τινὶ πίνειν, says Eustathius. "Propino" is used differently by the Romans.

v. 98. *As fiery coursers in the rapid race*

Toss their big heads, &c.]

The poet introduces two similitudes to represent the sailing of the

Toss their high heads, and scour along the plain ; 100
So mounts the bounding vessel o'er the main.

Back to the stern the parted billows flow,
And the black ocean foams and roars below.

Thus with spread sails the winged galley flies ;
Less swift an eagle cuts the liquid skies ; 105
Divine Ulysses was her sacred load,
A man, in wisdom equal to a god !

Phæacian vessel : the former describes the motion of it, as it bounds and rises over the waves, like horses tossing their heads in a race ; and also the steadiness of it, in that it sails with as much firmness over the billows, as horses tread upon the ground. The latter comparison is solely to shew the swiftness of the vessel.

The word in the original is *τετραόροι* ; an instance, that four horses were sometimes joined to the chariot. Virgil has borrowed this comparison, *Æn. v.*

“ Non tam præcípites bijugo certamine campum

“ Corripuere, ruuntque effusi carcere currus,

“ Nec sic immisissis aurigæ undantia lora

“ Concussere jugis, pronique in verbera pendent.”

It must be allowed that nothing was ever more happily executed than this description, and the copy far exceeds the original. Macrobius, *Saturnal. lib. v.* gives this as his opinion, and his reasons for it. The Greek poet (says that author) paints only the swiftness of the horses when scourged by the driver ; Virgil adds, the rushing of the chariot, the fields as it were devoured by the rapidity of the horses ; we see the throwing up of the reins, in “ undantia lora ;” and the attitude of the driver, leaning forward in the act of lashing of the horses, in the words, “ Pronique in verbera pendent.” It is true, nothing could be added more elegantly than the *ὑψὸς δειρόμενοι*, in Homer : it paints at once the swiftness of the race, and the rising posture of the horses in the act of running ; but Virgil is more copious, and has omitted no circumstance, and set the whole race fully before our eyes ; we may add, that the versification is as beautiful as the description compleat ; every ear must be sensible of it.

I will only further observe the judgment of Homer in speaking of every person in his particular character. When a vain-glorious Phæacian described the sailing of his own vessels, they were swift as thought, and endued with reason ; when Homer speaks in his own person to his readers, they are said only to be as swift as hawks or horses : Homer speaks like a poet, with some degree of amplification, but not with so much hyperbole as Alcinous. No people speak so fondly as sailors of their own ships to this day, and particularly are still apt to talk of them as of living creatures.

Much danger, long and mighty toils he bore,
In storms by sea, and combats on the shore;
All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast, 110
Wrapt in a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.

But when the morning star with early ray
Flam'd in the front of heav'n, and promis'd day;
Like distant clouds the mariner descries
Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise. 115
Far from the town a spacious port appears,
Sacred to Phorcys' pow'r, whose name it bears:
Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,
The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain,
Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide, 120
And ships secure without their halbers ride.

v. 112. *But when the morning star with early ray
Flam'd in the front of heav'n ———]*

From this passage we may gather, that Ithaca is distant from Corcyra or Phæacia no farther than a vessel sails in the compass of one night; and this agrees with the real distance between those islands; an instance that Homer was well acquainted with geography: this is the morning of the thirty-fifth day.

v. 116. *——— A spacious port appears,
Sacred to Phorcys' ———]*

Phorcys was the son of Pontus, and Terra, according to Hesiod's genealogy of the gods: this haven is said to be sacred to that deity, because he had a temple near it, from whence it received its appellation.

The whole voyage of Ulysses to his country, and indeed the whole Odyssey, has been turned into allegory; which I will lay before the reader as an instance of a trifling industry and strong imagination. Ulysses is in search of true felicity, the Ithaca and Penelope of Homer: he runs through many difficulties and dangers; this shews that happiness is not to be attained without labour and afflictions. He has several companions, who perish by their vices, and he alone escapes by the assistance of the Phæacians, and is transported in his sleep to his country; that is, the Phæacians, whose name implies blackness, *φαίλοι*, are the mourners at his death, and attend him to his grave: the ship is his grave, which is afterwards turned into a rock; which represents his monumental marble; his sleep means death, through which alone man arrives at eternal felicity. Spondanus.

High at the head a branching olive grows,
 And crowns the pointed cliffs with shady boughs.
 Beneath, a gloomy grotto's cool recess
 Delights the Nereids of the neighb'ring seas ; 125
 Where bowls and urns were form'd of living stone,
 And massy beams in native marble shone ;
 On which the labours of the nymphs were roll'd ;
 Their webs divine of purple mix'd with gold.
 Within the cave, the clust'ring bees attend 130
 Their waxen works, or from the roof depend.
 Perpetual waters o'er the pavement glide ;
 Two marble doors unfold on either side ;

V. 124. — *A gloomy grotto's cool recess.*] Porphyry has wrote a volume to explain this cave of the nymphs, with more piety perhaps than judgment ; and another person has perverted it into the utmost obscenity, and both allegorically. Porphyry (observes Eustathius) is of opinion, that the cave means the world ; it is called gloomy, but agreeable, because it was made out of darkness, and afterwards set in this agreeable order by the hand of the deity. It is consecrated to the nymphs ; that is, it is destined to the habitation of spiritual substances united to the body : the bowls and urns of living stone, are the bodies which are formed out of the earth ; the bees that make their honey in the cave are the souls of men, which perform all their operations in the body, and animate it ; the beams on which the nymphs roll their webs, are the bones over which the admirable embroidery of nerves, veins, and arteries are spread ; the fountains which water the cave are the seas, rivers and lakes that water the world ; and the two gates, are the two poles ; through the northern the souls descend from heaven to animate the body, through the southern they ascend to heaven, after they are separated from the body by death. But I confess I should rather chuse to understand the description poetically, believing that Homer never dreamed of these matters, though the age in which he flourished was addicted to allegory. How often do painters draw from the imagination only, merely to please the eye ? And why might not Homer write after it, especially in this place where he manifestly indulges his fancy. while he brings his hero to the first dawning of happiness ? He has long dwelt upon a series of horrors, and his imagination being tired with the melancholy story, it is not impossible but his spirit might be enlivened with the subject while he wrote, and this might lead him to indulge his fancy in a wonderful, and perhaps fabulous description. In short, I should much rather chuse to believe that the memory of the things to which he alludes in the description of the cave is lost, than credit such a laboured and distant allegory.

Sacred the south, by which the gods descend,
But mortals enter at the northern end.

135

v. 134. *Sacred the south, by which the gods descend.*] Virgil has imitated the description of this haven, *Æn.* lib. i.

"Est in secessu longo locus, insula portum
"Efficit, objectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto
"Frangitur," &c. —

Within a long recess there lies a bay,
An island shades it from the rolling sea,
And forms a port secure for ships to ride,
Broke by the jutting land on either side,
In double streams the briny waters glide.
Betwixt two rows of rocks, a silvan scene
Appears above, and groves for ever green :
A grot is form'd beneath with mossy seats,
To rest the Nereids, and exclude the heats ;
Down from the crannies of the living walls
The crystal streams descend in murmuring falls,
No halbers need to bind the vessels here,
Nor bearded anchors, for no storms they fear,

}

Dryden.

Scaliger infinitely prefers the Roman poet : Homer, says he, speaks "humilia humiliter, Virgilius grandiora magnifice;" but what I would chiefly observe is, not what Virgil has imitated, but what he has omitted ; namely, all that seems odd or less intelligible ; I mean the works of the bees in a cave so damp and moist ; and the two gates through which the gods and men enter.

I shall offer a conjecture to explain these two lines :

Sacred the south, by which the gods descend,
But mortals enter at the northern end.

It has been already observed, that the *Æthiopians* held an annual sacrifice of twelve days to the gods ; all that time they carried their images in procession, and placed them at their festivals, and for this reason the gods were said to feast with the *Æthiopians* ; that is, they were present with them by their statues : thus also *Themis* was said to form or dissolve assemblies, because they carried her image to the assemblies when they were convened, and when they were broken up they carried it away. Now we have already remarked, that this port was sacred to *Phorcys*, because he had a temple by it : it may not then be impossible, but that this temple having two doors, they might carry the statues of the gods in their processions through the southern gate, which might be consecrated to this use only, and the populace be forbid to enter by it : for that reason the deities were said to enter, namely, by their images. As the other gate being allotted to common use, was said to be the passage for mortals.

Thither they bent, and haul'd their ship to land,
 (The crooked keel divides the yellow sand)
 Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
 And gently plac'd him on the rocky shore.

v. 138. *Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
 And gently plac'd him on the rocky shore.]*

There is nothing in the whole *Odyssey* that more shocks our reason than the exposing Ulysses asleep on the shore by the Phæacians: "The passage (says Aristotle in his *Poetics*) where Ulysses is landed in Ithaca, is so full of absurdities, that they would be intolerable in a bad poet; but Homer has concealed them under an infinity of admirable beauties, with which he has adorned all that part of the *Odyssey*; these he has crowded together, as so many charms to hinder our perceiving the defects of the story:" Aristotle must be allowed to speak with great judgment; for what probability is there that a man so prudent as Ulysses, who was alone in a vessel at the discretion of strangers, should sleep so soundly, as to be taken out of it, carried with all his baggage on shore, and the Phæacians should set sail, and he never awake? This is still more absurd, if we remember that Ulysses has his soul so strongly bent upon his country; is it then possible, that he could be thus sunk into a lethargy, in the moment when he arrives at it? "How-ever (says Monsieur Dacier in his reflections upon Aristotle's *Poetics*) Homer was not ashamed of that absurdity, but not being able to omit it, he used it to give probability to the succeeding story: it was necessary for Ulysses to land alone, in order to his concealment; if he had been discovered, the suitors would immediately have destroyed him, if not as the real Ulysses, yet under the pretext of his being an impostor; they would then have seized his dominions, and married Penelope: now if he had been waked, the Phæacians would have been obliged to have attended him, which he could not have denied with decency, nor accepted with safety: Homer therefore had no other way left to unravel his fable happily: but he knew what was absurd in this method, and uses means to hide it; he lavishes out all his wit and address, and lays together such an abundance of admirable poetry, that the mind of the reader is so enchanted, that he perceives not the defect; he is like Ulysses lulled asleep, and knows no more than that hero, how he comes there. That great poet first describes the ceremony of Ulysses taking leave of Alcinous and his queen Arete; then he sets off the swiftness of the vessel by two beautiful comparisons; he describes the haven with great exactness, and adds to it the description of the cave of the nymphs; this last astonishes the reader, and he is so intent upon it, that he has not attention to consider the absurdity in the manner of Ulysses's landing: in

His treasures next, Alcinous' gifts, they laid

140

In the wild olive's unfrequented shade,

Secure from theft : then lanch'd the bark again,

Resum'd their oars, and measur'd back the main.

" this moment when he perceives the mind of the reader as it were
 " intoxicated with these beauties, he steals Ulysses on shore, and
 " dismisses the Phæacians ; all this takes up but eight verses. And
 " then lest the reader should reflect upon it, he immediately intro-
 " duces the deities, and gives us a dialogue between Jupiter and
 " Neptune. This keeps up still our wonder, and our reason has
 " not time to deliberate ; and when the dialogue is ended, a second
 " wonder succeeds, the bark is transformed into a rock : this is
 " done in the sight of the Phæacians, by which method the poet
 " carries us a while from the consideration of Ulysses, by remov-
 " ing the scene to a distant island ; there he detains us till we may
 " be supposed to have forgot the past absurdities, by relating the
 " astonishment of Alcinous at the sight of the prodigy, and his of-
 " fering up to Neptune, to appease his anger, a sacrifice of twelve
 " bulls. Then he returns to Ulysses who now wakes, and not
 " knowing the place where he was, (because Minerva made all
 " things appear in a disguised view) he complains of his misfor-
 " tunes, and accuses the Phæacians of infidelity ; at length Mi-
 " nerva comes to him in the shape of a young shepherd, &c. Thus
 " this absurdity, which appears in the fable when examined alone,
 " is hidden by the beauties that surround it ; this passage is more
 " adorned with fiction, and more wrought up with a variety of
 " poetical ornaments than most other places of the Odyssey. From
 " hence Aristotle makes an excellent observation. All efforts ima-
 " ginable (says that author) ought to be made to form the fable
 " rightly from the beginning ; but if it so happen that some places
 " must necessarily appear absurd, they must be admitted, especially
 " if they contribute to render the rest more probable ; but the poet
 " ought to reserve all the ornaments of diction for these weak
 " parts : the places that have either shining sentiments or manners
 " have no occasion for them, a dazzling expression rather damages
 " them, and serves only to eclipse their beauty."

v. 142. — *Then lanch'd the bark again.*] This voluntary and unexpected return of the Phæacians, and their landing Ulysses in his sleep, seems as unaccountable on the part of the Phæacians, as of Ulysses ; for what can be more absurd than to see them exposing a king and his effects upon the shores without his knowledge, and flying away secretly as from an enemy ? Having therefore in the preceding note shewed what the critics say in condemnation of Homer, it is but justice to lay together what they say in his defence.

That the Phæacians should fly away in secret is no wonder : Ulysses had through the whole course of the eleventh book, (particularly by the mouth of the prophet Tiresias) told the Phæacians

Nor yet forgot old ocean's dread supreme
The vengeance vow'd for eyeless Polypheme.

that the suitors plotted his destruction; and therefore the mariners might very reasonably be apprehensive that the suitors would use any persons as enemies, who should contribute to restore Ulysses to his country. It was therefore necessary that they should sail away without any stay upon the Ithacan shores. This is the reason why they made this voyage by night; namely to avoid discovery; and it was as necessary to return immediately, that is, just at the appearance of day, before people were abroad, that they might escape observation.

Eustathius remarks, that the Phæacians were an unwarlike nation, or-as it is expressed by a Phæacian,

Οὐ γὰρ φαίηκεσσι μέλει βιός, ὅδε φάρετρον,

and therefore they were afraid to teach any persons the way to their own country, by discovering the course of navigation to it; for this reason they begin their voyage to Ithaca by night, land Ulysses without waking him, and return at the appearance of daylight, that they might not shew what course was to be steered to come to the Phæacian shores.

Plutarch in his treatise of Reading the Poets, tells us, that there is a tradition among the Tuscans, that Ulysses was naturally drowsy, and a person that could not easily be conversed with, by reason of that sleepy disposition. But perhaps this might be only artful in a man of so great wisdom, and so great disguise or dissimulation; he was slow to give answers, when he had no mind to give any at all: though indeed it must be confessed, that this tradition is countenanced by his behaviour in the Odyssey, or rather may be only a story formed from it: his greatest calamities rise from his sleeping: when he was ready to land upon his own country by the favour of Æolus, he falls asleep, and his companions let loose a wind that bears him from it: he is asleep while they kill the oxen of Apollo; and here he sleeps while he is landed upon his own country. It might perhaps be this conduct in Homer, that gave Horace the hint to say,

“ — Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.”

Implying, that when Homer was at a loss to bring any difficult matter to an issue, he immediately laid his hero asleep, and this solved all the difficulty; as in the above-mentioned instances.

Plutarch is of opinion, that this sleep of Ulysses was feigned; and that he made use of the pretence of a “natural infirmity,” to conceal the straights he was in at that time in his thoughts; being ashamed to dismiss the Phæacians without entertainment and gifts of hospitality, and afraid of being discovered by the suitors, if he entertained such a multitude: therefore to avoid both these difficulties, he feigns a sleep while they land him, till they sail away.

Before the throne of mighty Jove he stood;
And fought the secret counsels of the god.

Shall then no more, O fire of gods! be mine
The rights and honours of a pow'r divine?
Scorn'd ev'n by man, and (oh severe disgrace) 150
By soft Phæacians, my degenerate race!
Against yon' destin'd head in vain I swore,
And menac'd vengeance, ere he reach'd his shore;
To reach his natal shore was thy decree;
Mild I obey'd, for who shall war with thee? 155
Behold him landed, careless and asleep,
From all th' eluded dangers of the deep!

Eustathius agrees with Plutarch in the main, and adds another reason why the Phæacians land Ulysses sleeping; namely, because they were ashamed to wake him, lest he should think they did it out of avarice, and expectation of a reward for bringing him to his own country.

I will only add, that there might be a natural reason for the sleep of Ulysses; we are to remember that this is a voyage in the night, the season of repose; and his spirits having been long agitated and fatigued by his calamities, might, upon his peace of mind at the return to his country, settle into a deep calmness and tranquillity, and so sink him into a deep sleep; Homer himself seems to give this as a reason of it in the following lines:

Much danger, long and mighty toils he bore,
In storms by sea, and combats on the shore;
All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast,
Wrapt in a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.

It must be allowed that the last line admirably paves the way for the following account; and the poet undoubtedly inserted it, to prevent our surprise at the manner of his being set on shore, by calling his sleep

— a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.

How far a wise man is obliged to resist the calls of nature, I leave to the discussion of philosophers; those of sleep are no more to be resisted, than those of thirst or hunger. But yet I confess Ulysses yielded unseasonably, and the strong passion and love for his country that so fully possessed his soul, should have given him a few hours of vigilance, when he was ready to see it after an absence of almost twenty years.

Lo where he lies, amidst a shining store
Of brass, rich garments, and refulgent ore :
And bears triumphant to his native isle 160
A prize more worth than Ilion's noble spoil.

To whom the father of th' immortal pow'rs,
Who swells the clouds, and gladdens earth with show'rs,
Can mighty Neptune thus of man complain !
Neptune, tremendous o'er the boundless main ! 165
Rever'd and awful ev'n in heav'n's abodes,
Antient and great ! a god above the gods !
If that low race offend thy pow'r divine,
(Weak, daring creatures !) is not vengeance thine ?
Go then, the guilty at thy will chastise. 170
He said : the shaker of the earth replies.

This then I doom ; to fix the gallant ship
A mark of vengeance on the sable deep :

v. 172. *This then I doom ; to fix the gallant ship
A mark of vengeance —
And roots her down, an everlasting rock.]*

I refer the reader to the eighth book of the Odyssæy, for a further account of this transformation. Scaliger condemns it, " Ulyssis
" navis in saxum mutatur a Neptuno, ut immortalem faciat, quem
" odio habere debuit." But will it not be an answer to say, that
it is an immortal monument of the vengeance and power of Neptune, and that whenever the story of the vessel was mentioned, the punishment likewise must be remembered in honour of that deity ? Some are of opinion, that it is a physical allegory, and that Homer delivers the opinion of the antients concerning the transmutation of one species into another, as wood into stone, by water, that is, by Neptune the god of it ; according to those lines of Ovid,

" Flumen habent Cicones, quod potum saxea reddit
" Viscera, quod tactis inducit marmora rebus."

But perhaps this is only one of those marvellous fictions written after the taste of antiquity, which delighted in wonders, and which the nature of epic poetry allows. " The marvellous (says Aristotle in his Poetics) ought to take place in tragedy, but much more in the epic, in which it proceeds even to the extravagant ; for the marvellous is always agreeable, and a proof of it is, that those who relate any thing, generally add something to the truth of it, that it may better please those who hear it. Homer (con-

To warn the thoughtless self-confiding train,
 No more unlicens'd thus to brave the main. 175
 Full in their port a shady hill shall rise,
 If such thy will.—We will it, Jove replies.
 Ev'n when with transport black'ning all the strand,
 The swarming people hail their ship to land,
 Fix her for ever, a memorial stone: 180
 Still let her seem to fail, and seem alone;
 The trembling crouds shall see the sudden shade
 Of whelming mountains overhang their head!
 With that, the god whose earthquakes rock the ground,
 Fierce to Phæacia crost the vast profound. 185

“tines he) is the man who has given the best instructions to
 “other poets how to tell lies agreeably.” Horace is of the same
 opinion.

“Atque ita mentitur, sic veris falsa remiscet,
 “Primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.”

However, we must not think that Aristotle advises poets to put things evidently false and impossible into their poems, or gives them licence to run out into wildness; he only means (as Monsieur Dacier observes) that the wonderful should exceed the probable, but not destroy it; and this will be effected if the poet has the address to prepare the reader, and to lead him by a probable train of things that depend on miracle, to the miracle itself, and reconcile him to it by degrees, so that his reason does not perceive, at least is not shocked at the illusion: thus for instance, Homer puts this transformation into the hands of a deity. He prepares us for it in the eighth book, he gives us the reason of the transformation; namely, the anger of Neptune; and at last he brings in Jupiter assenting to it. This is the method Homer takes to reconcile it to probability. Virgil undoubtedly thought it a beauty; for, after Homer's example, he gives us a transformation of the ships of Æneas into sea-nymphs.

I have already remarked from Bossu, that such miracles as these ought not to be too frequent in an epic poem; all the machines that require divine probability ought to be so detached from the action of the poem, that they may be retrenched from it, without destroying the action: those that are essential to the action, ought to be founded upon human probability. Thus if we take away this transformation, there is no chasm; and it in no way affects the integrity of the action.

Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way,
 The winged pinnace shot along the sea.
 The god arrests her with a sudden stroke,
 And roots her down an everlasting rock.
 Aghast the Scherians stand in deep surprise;
 All press to speak, all question with their eyes.
 What hands unseen the rapid bark restrain!
 And yet it swims, or seems to swim, the main!
 Thus they, unconscious of the deed divine:
 'Till great Alcinous rising own'd the sign.

190

195

Behold the long predestin'd day! (he cries)
 Oh certain faith of antient prophecies!
 These ears have heard my royal fire disclose
 A dreadful story, big with future woes;
 How mov'd with wrath, that careless we convey
 Promiscuous ev'ry guest to ev'ry bay,
 Stern Neptune rag'd; and how by his command
 Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand;
 (A monument of wrath) and mound on mound
 Shou'd hide our walls, or whelm beneath the ground.

200

The fates have follow'd as declar'd the feer.
 Be humbled, nations! and your monarch hear.
 No more unlicens'd brave the deeps, no more
 With ev'ry stranger pass from shore to shore;
 On angry Neptune now for mercy call:
 To his high name let twelve black oxen fall.
 So may the god reverse his purpos'd will,
 Nor o'er our city hang the dreadful hill.

206

210

v. 212. *So may the god reverse his purpos'd will.*] This agrees with what Homer writes in a former part of the *Odyssey*.

— *επειτα δὲ θεοὶ αὐτοὶ.*

That the gods themselves may be prevailed upon to change their anger by prayer: a sentiment agreeable to true religion. Homer does not tell us that the last denunciation of covering the town with a mountain, was fulfilled: it is probable that it was averted by the piety of Alcinous. But (as Eustathius observes) it was artful in the

The monarch spoke: they trembled and obey'd,
 Forth on the sands the victim oxen led: 215
 The gather'd tribes before the altars stand,
 And chiefs and rulers a majestic band.
 The king of ocean all the tribes implore;
 The blazing altars redden all the shore.
 Meanwhile Ulysses in his country lay, 220
 Releas'd from sleep, and round him might survey }
 The solitary shore, and rolling sea.
 Yet had his mind thro' tedious absence lost
 The dear remembrance of his native coast;
 Besides, Minerva, to secure her care, 225
 Diffus'd around a veil of thicken'd air:

poet to leave this point doubtful, to avoid detection in deviating from true history; for should posterity enquire where this land of the Phæacians lay, it would be found to be Corfu of the Venetians, and not covered with any mountain; but should this city have happened to have been utterly abolished by time, and so lost to posterity, it would have agreed with the relation of Homer, who leaves room to suppose it destroyed by Neptune. But how could Neptune be said to cover it with a mountain? Had not an inundation been more suitable to the god of the ocean? Neptune is called *ἰνερειός*, and *ἰνερύχθων*, or the earth-shaker: earthquakes were supposed to be occasioned by the ocean, or waters concealed in the caverns of the ground; and consequently Neptune may tumble a mountain upon this city of the Phæacians.

v. 225. *Besides, Minerva, to secure her care,
 Diffus'd around a veil of thicken'd air.*]

The meaning of this whole passage is probably no more than that Ulysses by his long absence had forgot the face of his own country; the woods by almost twenty years growth had a different appearance; and the public roads were altered by so great a length of time. How then should Ulysses come to the knowledge of the place? He goes to a shepherd, and by telling him a plausible story, draws it from him. This artifice is the Minerva that gives him information. By the "veil of thicken'd air" is meant, that Ulysses, to accomplish his re-establishment, took upon him a disguise, and concealed himself from the Ithacans; and this too being the dictate of wisdom, Homer ascribes it to Pallas.

The words of the original are,

— — Ὀφρά μιν αὐτὸν
 Ἀγνώσκον τεύξειεν — —

For so the gods ordain'd to keep unseen
His royal person from his friends and queen ;
'Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford
An ample vengeance to their injur'd lord.

230

Now all the land another prospect bore,
Another port appear'd, another shore,
And long-continu'd ways, and winding floods,
And unknown mountains, crown'd with unknown
woods.

Pensive and slow, with sudden grief oppress'd
The king arose, and beat his careful breast,
Cast a long look o'er all the coast and main,
And sought, around, his native realm in vain :
Then with erected eyes stood fix'd in woe,
And as he spoke, the tears began to flow.

235

240

Ye gods ! (he cry'd) upon what barren coast
In what new region is Ulysses tost ?

which are usually applied by interpreters to Ulysses, and mean that the goddess disguised him with this veil, that no one might know him. Dacier is of opinion that *ἄγνωτος* ought to be used actively; that is, the goddess acted thus to make him "unknowing" where he was, not "unknown" to the people; for that this was the effect of the veil, appears from the removal of it; for immediately upon the dispersion,

The king with joy confess'd his place of birth.

That the word *ἄγνωτος* will bear an active signification, she proves from the scholiast upon Oedipus of Sophocles. But perhaps the context will not permit this interpretation, though we should allow that the word *ἄγνωτος* will bear it. The passage runs thus: Pallas cast round a veil of air, that she might make him unknown, that she might instruct him, and that his wife and friends might not know him; for thus Homer interprets *ἄγνωτον* in the very next line, *μὴ γνοῖν ἄλοχόν*. It is therefore probable, that this veil had a double effect, both to render Ulysses unknown to the country, and the country to Ulysses. I am persuaded that this is the true meaning of *ἄγνωτος*, from the usage of it in this very book of the Odyssey.

Ἄλλ', ἄγε, σ' ἄγνωτον τεύξω πάντεσσι βροτοῖσι.

Here it can possibly signify nothing, but "I will render thee unknown to all mankind;" it is therefore probable, that in both places it bears the same signification.

Possess'd by wild barbarians, fierce in arms ?

Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms ?

Where shall this treasure now in safety lie ?

245

And whither, whither its sad owner fly ?

Ah why did I Alcinous' grace implore ?

Ah why forsake Phæacia's happy shore ?

Some juster prince perhaps had entertain'd,

And safe restor'd me to my native land.

250

Is this the promis'd, long expected coast,

And this the faith Phæacia's rulers boast ?

Oh righteous gods ! of all the great, how few

Are just to heav'n, and to their promise true !

But he, the pow'r to whose all-seeing eyes

255

The deeds of men appear without disguise,

'Tis his alone t' avenge the wrongs I bear :

For still th' oppress'd are his peculiar care.

To count these presents, and from thence to prove

Their faith, is mine : the rest belongs to Jove.

260

Then on the sands he rang'd his wealthy store,

The gold, the vests, the tripods, number'd o'er :

All these he found, but still in error lost

Disconsolate he wanders on the coast,

v. 262. *The gold, the vests, the tripods, number'd o'er.*] The conduct of Ulysses in numbering his effects, has been censured by some critics as avaricious : but we find him vindicated by Plutarch in his treatise of Reading the Poets : " If (says that author) Ulysses " finding himself in a solitary place, and ignorant of the country, " and having no security even for his own person, is nevertheless " chiefly solicitous, for his effects, lest any part might have been " stolen ; his covetousness is really to be pitied and detested. But " this is not the case : he counts his goods merely to prove the fidelity of the Phæacians, and to gather from it, whether they " had landed him upon his own country ; for it was not probable " that they would expose him in a strange region, and leave his " goods untouched, and by consequence reap no advantage from " their dishonesty : this therefore was a proper test, from which " to discover, if he was in his own country, and he deserved commendation for his wisdom in that action."

Sighs for his country, and laments again 265
 To the deaf rocks, and hoarse resounding main.
 When lo! the guardian goddess of the wife,
 Celestial Pallas, stood before his eyes;
 In show a youthful swain, of form divine,
 Who seem'd descended from some princely line, 270
 A graceful robe her slender body drest,
 Around her shoulders flew the waving vest,
 Her decent hand a shining jav'lin bore,
 And painted sandals on her feet she wore.
 To whom the king. Whoe'er of human race 275
 Thou art, that wander'st in this desert place!
 With joy to thee, as to some god, I bend,
 To thee my treasures and myself commend.
 O tell a wretch in exile doom'd to stray,
 What air I breathe, what country I survey? 280
 The fruitful continent's extreamest bound,
 Or some fair isle which Neptune's arms surround?
 From what fair clime (said she) remote from fame,
 Arriv'st thou here a stranger to our name?
 Thou seest an island, not to those unknown 285
 Whose hills are brighten'd by the rising sun,
 Nor those that plac'd beneath his utmost reign
 Behold him sinking in the western main,
 The rugged soil allows no level space
 For flying chariots, or the rapid race; 290
 Yet not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
 Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:
 The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
 And clust'ring grapes afford a gen'rous juice:

v. 293. *The loaded trees their various fruits produce.*] Nothing is more notorious than that an epic writer ought to give importance and grandeur to his action as much as possible in every circumstance; here the poet takes an opportunity to set the country of Ulysses in the most advantageous light, and shews that it was a prize worth the contest, and all the labour which Ulysses bestows to regain it. Statius is very faulty in this particular; he declaims

Woods crown our mountains, and in ev'ry grove 295
 The bounding goats and frisking heifers rove :
 Soft rains and kindly dews refresh the field,
 And rising springs eternal verdure yield.
 Ev'n to those shores is Ithaca renown'd,
 Where Troy's majestic ruins strow the ground. 300

against the designs he ascribes to his heroes, he debases his own subject, and shews that the great labour he puts upon them was ill employed for so wretched and pitiful a kingdom as that of Thebes. Thebaid, lib. i.

“ — Bellum est de paupere regno.”

But Ulysses was not king of Ithaca alone, but of Zacynthus, and Cephalenia, and the neighbouring islands. This appears from the second book of the Iliad, where he leads his subjects to the walls of Troy:

With those whom Cephalenia's isle inclos'd,
 Or till'd their fields along the coast oppos'd,
 Or where fair Ithaca o'erlooks the floods,
 Where high Neritos shakes his waving woods,
 Where Ægilipa's rugged sides are seen,
 Crocylia rocky, and Zacynthus green.

It is true that Ithaca contains little more than fifty miles in circuit, now called Val de Compare; Cephalenia is larger, and is one hundred and sixty miles in circumference: Zacynthus, now Zant, is in circuit about sixty miles, unspeakably fruitful, says Sandys, producing the best oil in the world, and excellent strong wines; but the chief riches of the island consist in corinths, which the inhabitants of Zant have in such quantities that they know not what to do with them; for besides private gains, amounting to fifteen hundred thousand zechins, they yearly pay forty-eight thousand dollars for customs and other duties. It is impossible so little a portion of earth should be more beneficial.

This observation is necessary to shew the value of Ulysses's dominions, and that the subject of the Odyssey is not trivial and unimportant; it is likewise of use to convince us, that the domestic cares and concerns of Telemachus proceeded not from meanness, but from the manners of the age; when pomp and luxury had not yet found countenance from princes; and that when we see Eumæus, who has the charge of Ulysses's hogs, we are not to suppose him a person of low rank and fortunes, but an officer of state and trust: the riches of those ages consisting in flocks and herds, in swine and oxen.

v. 299. *Ev'n to those shores is Ithaca renown'd.*] Nothing can more raise our esteem of the judgment of Homer, than such strokes of

At this, the chief with transport was possess'd,
His panting heart exulted in his breast;
Yet well dissembling his untimely joys,
And veiling truth in plausible disguise,
Thus, with an air sincere, in fiction bold,
His ready tale th' inventive hero told.

305

Oft' have I heard in Crete, this island's name;
For 'twas from Crete my native soil I came,
Self-banish'd thence. I sail'd before the wind,
And left my children and my friends behind.
From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
Whose son, the swift Orsilochns, I flew:

310

art. Here he introduces Minerva to let Ulysses into the knowledge of his country: How does she do this? She geographically describes it to him; so that he must almost know it by the description: but still she suppresses the name, and this keeps him in a pleasing suspense; he attends to every syllable to hear her name Ithaca, which she still defers, to continue his doubts and hopes, and at last, in the very close of her speech, she indirectly mentions it. This discovery, in my judgment, is carried on with great address, and cannot fail of awakening the curiosity of the reader; and I wonder how it could escape the observation of all the commentators upon the Odyssey.

v. 311. *From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
Whose son, the swift Orsilochns, I flew.*

Eustathius observes, that this relation is not consonant to antient histories, but invented to make the disguised Ulysses more acceptable to the suitors, should he be brought before them. For this person whom they could not know to be Ulysses, could not fail of finding favour with them, having slain the son of Idomeneus the friend of Ulysses: and though it be not recorded by the antients, yet it may be conjectured, that Orsilochns was thus slain, though not by Ulysses. If the death of Orsilochns was a story that made a noise in the world about that time, it was very artful in Ulysses to make use of it, to gain credit with this seeming Ithacan; for he relating the fact truly, might justly be believed to speak truly when he named himself the author of it, and consequently avoid all suspicion of being Ulysses. It is observable that Ulysses is very circumstantial in his story; he relates the time, the place, the manner, and the reason of his killing Orsilochns: this is done to give the story a greater air of truth; for it seems almost impossible that so many circumstances could be invented in a moment, and so well laid together as not to discover their own falsity. What he

(With brutal force he seiz'd my Trojan prey,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day)

Unseen I 'scap'd ; and favour'd by the night 315
In a Phœnician vessel took my flight,

says concerning the Phæacians leaving his effects entire without any damage, is not spoken (as Eustathius observes) in vain : he extols the fidelity of the Phæacians, as an example to be imitated by this seeming Ithacensian, and makes it an argument that he should practise the same integrity, in not offering violence or fraud to his effects or person.

It is true, the manner of the death of Orfilochus is liable to some objection, as it was executed clandestinely, and not heroically, as might be expected from the valour of Ulysses : but if it was a truth that Orfilochus was killed in that manner, Ulysses could not falsify the story : but in reality he is no way concerned in it ; for he speaks in the character of a Cretan, not in the person of Ulysses.

v. 316. *In a Phœnician vessel took my flight.*] The whole story of the voyages of Ulysses is related differently by Dictys Cretensis, in his history of the war of Troy : I will transcribe it, if not as a truth, yet as a curiosity.

" About this time Ulysses arrived at Crete with two vessels hired
" of the Phœnicians : for Telamon, enraged for the death of his
" son Ajax, had seized upon all that belonged to Ulysses and his
" companions, and he himself was with difficulty set at liberty.
" While he was in Crete, Idomeneus asked him how he fell into
" such great calamities ; to whom he recounted all his adventures.
" He told him, that after his departure from Troy he made
" an incursion upon Ismarus of the Ciconians, and there got great
" booty ; then touching upon the coast of the Lotophagi, he met
" with ill success, and sailed away to Sicily ; there Cyclops and
" Læstrigon, two brothers, used him barbarously ; and at length
" he lost most of his companions through the cruelty of Polypheme
" and Antiphates, the sons of Cyclops and Læstrigon ; but being
" afterwards received into favour by Polypheme, his companions
" attempted to carry off Arene, the king's daughter, who was
" fallen in love with Elpenor, one of his associates ; but the affair
" being discovered, and Ulysses dismissed, he sailed away by the
" Æolian islands, and came to Circe and Calypso, who were both
" queens of two isles ; there his companions wasted some time in
" dalliance and pleasures : thence he sailed to a people that were
" famed for magical incantations, to learn his future fortunes. He
" escaped the rocks of the Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis, though
" he there lost many of his companions ; then he fell into the
" hands of Phœnician rovers, who spared him ; and afterwards
" coming to Crete, he was dismissed by Idomeneus with two vessels,
" and arrived at the coast of Alcinous, who being prevailed
" upon by the glory of his name, entertained him courteously :

For Pyle or Elis bound : but tempest tost
 And raging billows drove us on your coast.
 In dead of night an unknown port we gain'd,
 Spent with fatigue, and slept secure on land. 320
 But ere the rosy morn renew'd the day,
 While in th' embrace of pleasing sleep I lay,
 Sudden, invited by auspicious gales,
 They land my goods, and hoist their flying sails.
 Abandon'd here, my fortune I deplore, 325
 A hapless exile on a foreign shore.

Thus while he spoke, the blue-ey'd maid began
 With pleasing smiles to view the god-like man :
 Then chang'd her form : and now, divinely bright,
 Jove's heav'nly daughter stood confess'd to sight. 330
 Like a fair virgin in her beauty's bloom,
 Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.

O still the same Ulysses ! she rejoin'd,
 In useful craft successfully refin'd !
 Artful in speech, in action, and in mind ! 335

“ from him he learned that Penelope was address'd by thirty
 “ princes ; upon this, with much intreaty, he persuaded Alci-
 “ nous to undertake a voyage to re-establish him in his territories ;
 “ they set sail together, and concealing themselves with Telema-
 “ chus till all things were concerted, they led their friends to the
 “ palace, and slew the suitors oppress'd with sleep and drowziness.”

The difference between the poet and the historian lies chiefly in
 what is here said of the death of Orsilochns ; Dictys tells us, that
 Ulysses was entertained like a friend by Idomeneus, and Homer
 writes that he slew his son ; now Idomeneus cannot be supposed to
 have favoured the murderer of his son : but this is no objection,
 if we consider that Ulysses speaks not as Ulysses, but in a person-
 ated character, and therefore Orsilochns must be judged to have fallen
 by the hand of the person whose character Ulysses assumes ; that
 is, by a Cretan, and not Ulysses.

Dictys is supposed to have served under this Idomeneus, and to
 have wrote an history of the Trojan war in Phœnician characters ;
 and Tzetzes tells us, that Homer formed his poem upon his plan ;
 but the history now extant, published by Mrs. Le Fevre, is a coun-
 terfeit : so that what I have here translated, is inserted not as an
 authority, but as the opinion of an unknown writer ; and I lay no
 other weight upon it.

Suffic'd it not, that thy long labours past
 Secure thou seest thy native shore at last?
 But this to me? who, like thyself, excell
 In arts of counsel, and dissembling well.
 To me, whose wit exceeds the pow'rs divine, 340
 No less than mortals are surpass'd by thine.
 Know'st thou not me? who made thy life my care,
 Thro' ten years wand'ring, and thro' ten years war;
 Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade,
 To raise his wonder, and engage his aid : 345
 And now appear, thy treasures to protect,
 Conceal thy person, thy designs direct,
 And tell what more thou must from fate expect. }
 Domestic woes far heavier to be borne!
 The pride of fools, and slaves insulting scorn. 350

v. 338. ——— *Who, like thyself, excell
 In arts of counsel, and dissembling well.*]

It has been objected against Homer, that he gives a degree of dissimulation to his hero, unworthy of a brave man, and an ingenuous disposition : here we have a full vindication of Ulysses, from the mouth of the goddess of wisdom ; he uses only a prudent dissimulation ; he is ἀσχιϋόϋ, which we may almost literally render, “ master of a great presence of mind :” that is, upon every emergency he finds an immediate resource to extricate himself from it. If his dissimulation had been vicious, it would have been an absurdity to have introduced Minerva praising and recommending it ; on the contrary, all disguise which consists with innocence and prudence, is so far from being mean, that it really is a praise to a person who uses it. I speak not of common life, or as if men should always act under a mask, and in disguise ; that indeed betrays design and insincerity : I only recommend it as an instance how men should behave in the article of danger, when it is as reputable to elude an enemy as to defeat one.

— — “ Dolus an virtus quis in hoste requirit.”

This is the character of Ulysses, who uses only such artifice as is suggested by wisdom, such as turns to his benefit in all extremities, such as Minerva may boast to practise without a rival among the gods, as much as Ulysses among mankind. In short, this dissimulation in war may be called stratagem and conduct, in other exigencies address and dexterity ; nor is Ulysses criminal, but artful.

But thou be silent, nor reveal thy state ;
Yield to the force of unresisted fate,
And bear unmov'd the wrongs of base mankind,
The last, and hardest, conquest of the mind.

Goddeſs of wiſdom ! Ithacus replies, 355
He who diſcerns thee muſt be truly wiſe,
So ſeldom view'd, and ever in diſguiſe !
When the bold Argives led their warring pow'rs,
Againſt proud Ilion's well defended tow'rs ;
Ulyſſes was thy care, celeftial maid ! 360
Grac'd with thy ſight, and favour'd with thy aid.
But when the Trojan piles in aſhes lay,
And bound for Greece we plough'd the wat'ry way ;
Our fleet diſpers'd and driv'n from coaſt to coaſt,
Thy ſacred preſence from that hour I loſt : 365
'Till I beheld thy radiant form once more,
And heard thy counſels on Phæacia's ſhore.
But, by th' almighty author of thy race,
Tell me, oh tell, is this my native place ?
For much I fear, long tracts of land and ſea 370
Divide this coaſt from diſtant Ithaca ;
The ſweet deluſion kindly you impoſe,
To ſooth my hopes, and mitigate my woes.

Thus he. The blue-ey'd goddeſs thus replies.
How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wiſe ! 375
Who, vers'd in fortune, fear the flatt'ring ſhow,
And taſte not half the bliſs the gods beſtow.

v. 369. *Tell me, oh tell, is this my native place ?*] It may appear ſomewhat extraordinary that Ulyſſes ſhould not believe Minerva, who had already aſſured him that he was landed in his own country : but two answers may be given to this objection, and his doubts may be aſcribed to his having loſt the knowledge of it through his long abſence, for that is the veil which is caſt before his eyes ; or to the nature of man in general, who when he deſires any thing vehemently, ſcarce believes himſelf in the poſſeſſion of it, even while he poſſeſſes it. Nothing is more frequent than ſuch expreſſions upon the theatre, and in the tranſport of an unexpected happineſs, we are apt to think it a deluſion ; from hence the fears of Ulyſſes ariſe, and they are to be imputed to his vehement love of his country, not to his unbelief.

The more shall Pallas aid thy just desires,
And guard the wisdom which herself inspires.
Others, long absent from their native place, 380 }
Straight seek their home, and fly with eager pace }
To their wives arms, and children's dear embrace.
Not thus Ulysses : he decrees to prove
His subjects faith, and queen's suspected love ;
Who mourn'd her lord twice ten revolving years, 385
And wastes the days in grief, the nights in tears.
But Pallas knew (thy friends and navy lost,)
Once more 'twas giv'n thee to behold thy coast :
Yet how could I with adverse fate engage,
And mighty Neptune's unrelenting rage ? 390
Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore
The pleasing prospect of thy native shore.
Behold the port of Phorcys ! fenc'd around
With rocky mountains, and with olives crown'd.
Behold the gloomy grot ! whose cool recess 395
Delights the Nereids of the neighb'ring seas :
Whose now-neglected altars, in thy reign
Blush'd with the blood of sheep and oxen slain.
Behold ! where Neritus the clouds divides,
And shakes the waving forests on his sides. 400
So spake the goddess, and the prospect clear'd,
The mists dispers'd, and all the coast appear'd.
The king with joy confess'd his place of birth,
And on his knees salutes his mother earth :
Then with his suppliant hands upheld in air, 405
Thus to the sea-green sisters sends his pray'r.
All hail ! Ye virgin daughters of the main !
Ye streams, beyond my hopes beheld again !
To you once more your own Ulysses bows ;
Attend his transports, and receive his vows ! 410
If Jove prolong my days, and Pallas crown
The growing virtues of my youthful son,

To you shall rites divine be ever paid,
And grateful off'rings on your altars laid.

Then thus Minerva. From that anxious breast 415
Dismiss those cares, and leave to heav'n the rest.
Our task be now thy treasur'd stores to save,
Deep in the close recesses of the cave :

Then future means consult—she spoke, and trod
The shady grot, that brighten'd with the god. 420
The closest caverns of the grot she sought ;
The gold, the brass, the robes, Ulysses brought ;
These in the secret gloom the chief dispos'd ;
The entrance with a rock the goddess clos'd.

Now, seated in the olive's sacred shade, 425
Confer the hero and the martial maid.

The goddess of the azure eyes began :
Son of Laertes ! much-experienc'd man !
The suitor-train thy earliest care demand,
Of that luxurious race to rid the land : 430

Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,
And proud addresses to the matchless queen.
But she thy absence mourns from day to day,
And inly bleeds, and silent wastes away :
Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives 435
Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.

To this Ulysses. Oh celestial maid !
Prais'd be thy counsel, and thy timely aid :
Else had I seen my native walls in vain,
Like great Atrides just restor'd and slain. 440
Vouchsafe the means of vengeance to debate,
And plan with all thy arts the scene of fate.
Then, then be present, and my soul inspire,
As when we wrapt Troy's heav'n-built walls in fire.
Tho' leagu'd against me hundred heroes stand, 445
Hundreds shall fall, if Pallas aid my hand.

v. 445. *Tho' leagu'd against me hundreds, &c.*] Nothing is more judicious than this conduct in Homer; the whole number of

She answer'd: in the dreadful day of fight
 Know, I am with thee, strong in all my might.
 If thou but equal to thyself be found,
 What gasping numbers then shall press the ground!
 What human victims stain the feastful floor! 451
 How wide the pavements float with guilty gore!
 It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,
 And secret walk, unknown to mortal eyes.
 For this, my hand shall wither ev'ry grace, 455
 And ev'ry elegance of form and face,
 O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,
 Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head,
 Disfigure ev'ry limb with coarse attire,
 And in thy eyes extinguish all the fire; 460
 Add all the wants and the decays of life,
 Estrange thee from thy own; thy son, thy wife;
 From the loath'd object ev'ry fight shall turn,
 And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.

suitors are to be slain by a few hands, which might shock our reason if it were related suddenly; without any preparation to shew us the probability of it: this is the intent of Homer in this and various other places of the Odyssey: he softens the relation, and reconciles us to it by such insertions, before he describes that great event. The antients (says Eustathius) would not here allow Ulysses to speak hyperbolically; he is that hero whom we have already seen in the Iliad resist whole bands of Trojans, when the Greeks were repulsed, where he slew numbers of enemies, and sustained their assaults till he was disengaged by Ajax. Besides, there is an excellent moral in what Ulysses speaks; it contains this certain truth, (adds Dacier) that a man assisted by heaven, has not only nothing to fear, but is assured to triumph over all the united powers of mankind.

v. 452. *How wide the pavements float with guilty gore!*] The words in the Greek are ἀσπίλον ἔδαα, which Eustathius imagines to signify the land of Ithaca; for the hall even of a palace is too narrow to be stiled immense, or ἀσπίλον. But this contradicts the matter of fact, as appears from the place where the suitors were slain, which was not in the fields of Ithaca, but in the palace of Ulysses: ἀσπίλον really signifies large or spacious; and a palace that could entertain at one time so great a number of suitors might be called vast, or ἀσπίλος, which Hesychius interprets by λίαν πάλος, μέγας. Dacier.

Go first the master of thy herds to find, 465
 True to his charge, a loyal swain and kind :
 For thee he sighs ; and to the royal heir
 And chaste Penelope extends his care.
 At the Coracian rock he now resides,
 Where Arethusa's fable water glides ; 470
 The fable water and the copious mast
 Swell the fat herd ; luxuriant, large repast !
 With him, rest peaceful in the rural cell,
 And all you ask his faithful tongue shall tell.
 Me into other realms my cares convey, 475
 To Sparta, still with female beauty gay ;
 For know, to Sparta thy lov'd offspring came,
 To learn thy fortunes from the voice of fame.

At this the father, with a father's care.
 Must he too suffer : he, oh goddess ! bear 480 }
 Of wand'rings and of woes a wretched share ?
 Thro' the wild ocean plough the dang'rous way,
 And leave his fortunes and his house a prey ?
 Why would'st not thou, oh all-enlighten'd mind !
 Inform him certain, and protect him, kind ? 485

To whom Minerva. Be thy soul at rest ;
 And know, whatever heav'n ordains, is best.
 To fame I sent him, to acquire renown :
 To other regions is his virtue known.

v. 465. *Go first the master of thy herds to find.*] There are many reasons why this injunction was necessary : the hero of a poem ought never to be out of sight, never out of action : neither is Ulysses idle in this recess ; he goes thither to acquaint himself with the condition of his affairs, both public and domestic : he there lays the plan for the destruction of the suitors, enquires after their numbers, and the state of Penelope and Telemachus. Besides, he here resides in full security and privacy, till he has prepared all things for the execution of the great event of the whole *Odyssey*.

v. 469. ——— *Coracian rock* ———] This rock was so called from a young man whose name was *Corax*, who in pursuit of an hare fell from it and broke his neck : *Arethusa* his mother bearing of the accident, hanged herself by the fountain, which afterwards took its name from her, and was called *Arethusa*, *Eustathius*.

Secure he sits, near great Atrides plac'd; 490
 With friendship strengthen'd, and with honours grac'd.
 But lo! an ambush waits his passage o'er;
 Fierce foes insidious intercept the shore:
 In vain! far sooner all the murd'rous brood
 This injur'd land shall fatten with their blood: 495
 She spake, then touch'd him with her pow'rful wand:
 The skin shrunk up, and wither'd at her hand:
 A swift old age o'er all his members spread;
 A sudden frost was sprinkled on his head;
 Nor longer in the heavy eye-ball shin'd 500
 The glance divine, forth beaming from the mind.
 His robe, which spots indelible besmear,
 In rags dishonest flutters with the air:
 A stag's torn hide is lapt around his reins;
 A rugged staff his trembling hand sustains; 505
 And at his side a wretched scrip was hung,
 Wide-patch'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
 So look'd the chief, so mov'd! to mortal eyes
 Object uncouth! a man of miseries!

v. 502. *His robe, which spots indelible besmear.*] I doubt not but Homer draws after the life. We have the whole equipage and accoutrements of a beggar, yet so drawn by Homer, as even to retain a nobleness and dignity; let any person read the description, and he will be convinced of it; what can be more lofty and sonorous than this verse?

Ῥωαλία, ῥυτίωνλα κακῶ μεμορυσμένα καπνῶ.

It is no humility to say that a translator must fall short of the original in such passages; the Greek language has words noble and sounding to express all subjects, which are wanting in our tongue; all that is to be expected is to keep the diction from appearing mean or ridiculous. They are greatly mistaken who impute this disguise of Ulysses in the form of a beggar, as a fault to Homer; there is nothing either absurd or mean in it; for the way to make a king undiscoverable, is to dress him as unlike himself as possible. David counterfeited madness, as Ulysses poverty, and neither of them ought to lie under any imputation; it is easy to vindicate Homer, from the disguise of the greatest persons and generals in history, upon the like emergencies; but there is no occasion for it.

While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air, 510
To Sparta flies, Telemachus her care.

v. 510. *While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air,
To Sparta flies ————]*

Homer is now preparing to turn the relation from Ulysses to Telemachus, whom we left at Sparta with Menelaus in the fourth book of the Odyssey. He has been long out of sight, and we have heard of none of his actions; Telemachus is not the hero of the poem: he is only an under agent, and consequently the poet was at liberty to omit any or all of his adventures, unless such as have a necessary connection with the story of the Odyssey, and contribute to the re-establishment of Ulysses; by this method likewise Homer gives variety to his poetry, and breaks or gathers up the thread of it, as it tends to diversify the whole: we may consider an epic poem as a spacious garden, where there are to be different walks and views, lest the eye should be tired with too great a regularity and uniformity: the chief avenue ought to be the most ample and noble, but there should be by-walks to retire into sometimes for our ease and refreshment. The poet thus gives us several openings to draw us forward with pleasure; and though the great event of the poem be chiefly in view, yet he sometimes leads us aside into other short passages which end in it again, and bring us with pleasure to the conclusion of it. Thus, for instance, Homer begins with the story of Telemachus and the suitors; then he leaves them awhile, and more largely lays before us the adventures of Ulysses, the hero of his poem; when he has satisfied the curiosity of the reader by a full narration of what belongs to him, he returns to Telemachus and the suitors: at length he unites the two stories, and proceeds directly to the end of the Odyssey. Thus, all the collateral and indirect passages fall into one center, and main point of view. The eye is continually entertained with some new object, and we pass on from incident to incident, not only without fatigue, but with pleasure and admiration.

THE ODYSSEY.

* BOOK XIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

The conversation with Eumæus.

Ulysses arrives in disguise at the house of Eumæus, where he is received, entertained, and lodged, with the utmost hospitality. The several discourses of that faithful old servant, with the feigned story told by Ulysses to conceal himself, and other conversations on various subjects, take up this entire book.

BUT he, deep-musing, o'er the mountains stray'd
Thro' mazy thickets of the woodland shade,
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,
With cliffs and nodding forests over-hung.

* We see in this book the character of a faithful, wise, benevolent old man in Eumæus; one happily innocent, unambitious, and wholly employed in rural affairs. The whole interview between Ulysses and Eumæus has fallen into ridicule; Eumæus has been judged to be of the same rank and condition with our modern swine-herds. But herds and flocks were then kept and attended by the sons of kings; thus Paris watched the flocks of Priam in the groves of Ida, and the same is said of many of the heroes in the Iliad; these offices were places of dignity, and filled by persons of birth; and such was Eumæus, descended from a prince, named Ctesius: thus the master of the horse is a post of honour in modern ages.

It is in poetry, as in painting; where the artist does not confine himself to draw only gods or heroes, palaces and princes; but he frequently employs his pencil in representing landscapes, rural scenes, groves, cottages, and shepherds tending their flocks.

Eumæus at his silvan lodge he fought,
A faithful servant, and without a fault.

5

There is a passage in Monsieur Boileau's reflections upon Longinus, which fully vindicates all the places of Homer that have been censured as low and too familiar. "There is nothing (observes that author) that more disgraces a composition than the use of vulgar words: a mean thought expressed in noble terms, is generally more taking than a noble thought debased by mean terms: the reason is, every person cannot judge of the justness and strength of a thought, but there are very few, especially in living languages, who are not shocked at mean words: and yet almost all writers fall into this fault. Longinus accuses Herodotus, the most polite of all the Greek historians, of this defect; and Livy, Sallust, and Virgil, have fallen under the same imputation. Is it not then very surprising that no reproach upon this account has fallen upon Homer? especially, though he has composed two large poems, and though no author has descended more frequently into the detail of little particularities; yet he never uses terms which are not noble, or if he uses humble words or phrases, it is with so much art, that, as Dionysius Halicarnassus observes, they become noble and harmonious. We may learn from hence the ignorance of those modern critics, who judge of the Greek without the knowledge of it; and having never read Homer but in low and inelegant translations, impute the meanness of the translator to the poet. Besides, the words of different languages are not exactly correspondent, and it often happens, that an expression which is noble in the Greek, cannot be rendered in a version but by words that are either mean in the sound or usage. Thus *asus*, and *asinus* in Latin, are mean to the last degree; though *ἄνος* in the Greek be used in the most magnificent descriptions, and has nothing mean in it; in like manner the terms *hogherd* and *cowkeeper*, are not to be used in our poetry; but there are no finer words in the Greek language than *βόσκος* and *βοσκήτης*: and Virgil, who intitles his Eclogues *Bucolics* in the Roman tongue, would have been ashamed to call them in our language *The Dialogues of Cowkeepers*."

Homer himself convinces us of the truth of this observation; nay, one would imagine that he intended industriously to force it upon our notice; for he frequently calls Eumæus *Ὀρχαμος ἀνδρῶν*, or "prince of men;" and his common epithet is *θεῖος*, or *δῖος ὑποργός*. Homer would not have applied these appellations to him, if he had not been a person of dignity; it being the same title that he bestows upon his greatest heroes, Ulysses or Achilles.

v. 1. *But he, deep musing, o'er the mountain stray'd.*] I shall transcribe the observation of Dionysius Halicarnassus upon the first verses in this book: the same method, remarks that author, makes both prose and verse beautiful; which consists in these three things.

Ulysses found him busied, as he sat
Before the threshold of his rustic gate ;

the judicious coaptation and ranging of the words, the position of the members and parts of the verse, and the various measure of the periods. Whoever would write elegantly, must have regard to the different turn and juncture of every period, there must be proper distances and pauses ; every verse must be a complete sentence, but broken and interrupted, and the parts made unequal, some longer, some shorter, to give a variety of cadence to it. Neither the turn of the parts of the verse, nor the length, ought to be alike. This is absolutely necessary : for the epic or heroic verse is of a fixed determinate length, and we cannot, as in the lyric, make one longer, and another shorter ; therefore to avoid an identity of cadence, and a perpetual return of the same periods, it is requisite to contract, lengthen, and interrupt the pause and structure of the members of the verses, to create an harmonious inequality, and out of a fixed number of syllables to raise a perpetual diversity. For instance,

Αὐτὰρ ὃ ἐκ λιμένος προσέειπεν τρηχεῖαν ἀταρπὼν.

Here one line makes one sentence ; the next is shorter

Χῶρον ἄν' ὑλήεντα ———

The next is still shorter,

———— δι' ἄκριας ———

The next sentence composes two hemistichs,

———— Ἦ οἱ Ἀθήνη
Πέφραδε δῖον ὑφορῶν ———

and is entirely unlike any of the preceding periods,

———— Ὅ οἱ βιότιο μάλιστ'
Κηδετο σικήων ὅς κησαίῳ δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς.

Here again the sentence is not finished with the former verse but breaks into the fourth line ; and lest we should be out of breath with the length of the sentence, the period and the verse conclude together at the end of it.

Then Homer begins a new sentence, and makes it pause differently from any of the former.

Τὸν δ' ἄρ' ἐνὶ προδρόμῳ εὖρ' ἤμενον ———

Then he adds,

———— Ἐνθά οἱ αὖλῃ
Ἵψηλὴ δέδμητο ———

Around, the mansion in a circle shone;
 A rural portico of rugged stone: 10
 (In absence of his lord, with honest toil
 His own industrious hands had rais'd the pile)
 The wall was stone from neighb'ring quarries borne,
 Encircled with a fence of native thorn,
 And strong with pales, by many a weary stroke 15
 Of stubborn labour hewn from heart of oak;
 Frequent and thick. Within the space were rear'd
 Twelve ample cells, the lodgement of his herd.
 Full fifty pregnant females each contain'd;
 The males without (a smaller race) remain'd; 20
 Doom'd to supply the suitors wasteful feast,
 A stock by daily luxury decreas't;

This is perfectly unequal to the foregoing period, and the pause of the sentence is carried forward into the second verse; and what then follows is neither distinguished by the pauses nor parts periodically, but almost at every word there is a stop.

————— Περισκέπτω ἐνὶ χώρῳ,
 Καλήτε, μεγάληε.

No doubt but Homer was a perfect master of numbers; a man can no more be a poet than a musician, without a good ear, as we usually express it. It is true, that versification is but the mechanism of poetry, but it sets off good sense to the best advantage; it is a colouring that enlivens the portrait, and makes even a beauty more agreeable.

I will conclude this note, with observing what Mr. Dryden says of these two lines of Cowper's Hill:

Tho' deep, yet clear, tho' gentle, yet not dull,
 Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

"There are few, (says he) who make verses, that have observed
 "the sweetness of these lines, and fewer who can find the reason
 "of it." But I believe no one will be at a loss to solve the difficulty who considers this observation of Dionysius: and I doubt not but the chief sweetness arises from the judicious and harmonious pauses of the several periods of the verses; not to mention the happy choice of the words, in which there is scarce one rough consonant, many liquids, and those liquids softened with a multitude of vowels.

Now scarce four hundred left. These to defend,
Four savage dogs, a watchful guard, attend.

Here sat Eumæus, and his cares apply'd 25
To form strong buskins of well-season'd hide.

v. 25. *Here sat Eumæus, and his cares apply'd, &c.*] I doubt not but this employment of Eumæus has been another cause of the mean character that has been formed of his condition: but this mistake arises from our judging of the dignity of men from the employments they followed three thousand years past, by the notions we have of those employments at present; and because they are now only the occupation of the vulgar, we imagine that they were so formerly: kings and princes in the earlier ages of the world laboured in arts and occupations, and were above nothing that tended to promote the conveniencies of life; they performed that with their own hands, which we now perform by those of our servants: if this were not so, the cookery of Achilles in the Iliad would equally disparage that hero, as this employment would disgrace Eumæus in the Odyssey: arts were then in their infancy, and were honourable to the practisers: thus Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, as skilfully as a shipwright.

Besides, even at this day arts are in high esteem in the oriental world, and are practised by the greatest personages. Every man in Turkey is of some trade; sultan Achmet was a maker of ivory rings, which the Turks wear upon their thumbs when they shoot their arrows, and in this occupation he worked several hours daily; and another of their emperors was deposed, because he refused to work in his occupation.

It must be confessed that our translations have contributed to give those who are unacquainted with the Greek, a mean idea of Eumæus. This place is thus rendered by two of his translators.

Himself there sat ord'ring a pair of brogues,
Of a py'd bullock's skin ———

Himself was leather to his foot applying,
Made of a good cow-hide well coloured.

Whereas Homer is as lofty and harmonious, as these are flat and inelegant.

Αὐτὸς δ' ἀμφὶ πόδεςσιν ἑοῖς ἀράρισκε πέδιλα
Τάμνων δεῖμα βόειον, εὐχρεές.

It is true, a translator in such places as these has an hard task; a language like the Greek, which is always flowing, musical, and sonorous, is very difficult to be imitated in other tongues, especially where the corresponding words are not equally significant and graceful.

Of four assistants who his labour share,
 Three now were absent on the rural care;
 The fourth drove victims to the suitor train:
 But he, of ancient faith, a simple swain,
 Sigh'd, while he furnish'd the luxurious board,
 And weary'd heav'n with wishes for his lord.

39

Soon as Ulysses near th' enclosure drew,
 With open mouths the furious mastives flew:
 Down sat the sage; and cautious to withstand,
 Let fall th' offensive truncheon from his hand,

35

In short, the reader is to consider this whole description as a true picture of antient life; and then he will not fail of the pleasure of knowing how the great men of antient times passed their lives, and how those heroes, who performed such noble parts on the public stage of life, acted in private when withdrawn from notice and observation. Those ages retained an universal simplicity of manners: Telemachus and Eumæus have both dogs for their attendants; nay, and in later times, before luxury prevailed among the Romans, we read of a dictator brought from the plough, to lead the bravest soldiers in the world to conquer it.

v. 35. *Down sat the sage; and cautious to withstand,
 Let fall th' offensive truncheon from his hand.]*

Homer has been censured for representing his hero unworthily: is it probable that he who had met whole armies in battle, should now throw away his staff out of fear of a dog? That he should abandon his defence by casting himself on the ground, and leave himself to his mercy? But Eustathius fully vindicates Ulysses. It is a natural defence to avert the fury of a dog, to cast away our weapons, to shew that we intend him no violence. Pliny has the like observation in the eighth book of his Natural History: "Impetus canum & sævitia mitigatur ab homine humi confiscente."

All that Homer says of the dogs, is imitated by Theocritus, Idyll. xxv. v. 68.

Θεσπέσιον δ' ὑλάοντες ἐπιδράμον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος
 Τὸς μὲν ὄγε λάεσσιν ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὅσσον αἰεῖον
 Φεύγμεν ἅψ' ἐπίσω δειδίστετο, &c.

What Homer speaks of Ulysses, Theocritus applies to Hercules; a demonstration that he thought it to be a picture of nature, and therefore inserted it in that heroic Idyllium.

Sudden, the master runs; aloud he calls;
 And from his hasty hand the leather falls;
 With show'rs of stones he drives them far away;
 The scatt'ring dogs around at distance bay.

40

Unhappy stranger! (thus the faithful swain
 Began with accent gracious and humane)

v. 37. *Sudden, the master runs, &c.*] This is thought to be an adventure that really happened to the poet himself; it is related in the life of Homer ascribed to Herodotus. Thestorides having persuaded Homer to permit him to transcribe his verses, he immediately removed to Chios, and proclaimed himself the author: Homer being informed of it, set sail for Chios, and landing near it, he was in danger of being torn in pieces by the dogs of Glaucus, who protected him, and received him hospitably: the poet in return laboured to reward his kindness, by relating to him the most curious of his adventures that had happened in the course of his voyages. When therefore (adds Dacier) we see Ulysses entertained by Eumæus, we have the satisfaction of imagining we see Homer himself in discourse with his courteous friend Glaucus.

v. 41. ——— *thus the faithful swain, &c.*] The words in the Greek are δῖος ὑποπόδης, literally rendered, "the divine swine-herd," which are burlesque in modern languages, and would have been no less in Greek, if the person of Eumæus had not been honourable, and his office a station of dignity: for the sole reason why such a translation would now be ridiculous, is because such employments are now fallen into contempt. Let any person ask this question, Would Homer have applied the epithet divine to a modern swineherd? If he would not, it is an evidence that Eumæus was a man of consequence, and his post a place of honour; otherwise Homer would have been guilty of burlesquing his own poetry.

Dacier very well remarks, that the words Eumæus here speaks, and indeed his whole conversation, shew him to be a person of a good education, and of noble and pious sentiments; he discovers a natural and flowing eloquence, and appears to be a man of great humanity and wisdom.

There is a peculiarity in Homer's manner of apostrophizing Eumæus, and speaking of him in the second person; it is generally applied by that poet only to men of account and distinction, and by it the poet, as it were, addresses them with respect; thus in the Iliad he introduces Menelaus.

Οὐδὲ σέθεν, Μενέλαε, θεοὶ ἐλάθοντο,

——— Τόνδε προσέφη Πατρόκλος.

This enlivens the diction, and awakens the attention of the reader. Eustathius observes that Eumæus is the only person of whom

What sorrow had been mine, if at my gate
 Thy rev'rend age had met a shameful fate?
 Enough of woes already have I known; 45
 Enough my master's sorrows and my own.
 While here, (ungrateful task!) his herds I feed,
 Ordain'd for lawless rioters to bleed;
 Perhaps supported at another's board,
 Far from his country roams my hapless lord! 50
 Or sigh'd in exile forth his latest breath,
 Now cover'd with th' eternal shade of death!

But enter this my homely roof, and see
 Our woods not void of hospitality.
 Then tell me whence thou art? and what the share 55
 Of woes and wand'rings thou wert born to bear?

He said, and seconding the kind request,
 With friendly step precedes his unknown guest.
 A shaggy goat's soft hide beneath him spread,
 And with fresh rushes heap'd an ample bed: 60
 Joy touch'd the hero's tender soul, to find
 So just reception from a heart so kind:

And oh, ye gods! with all your blessings grace
 (He thus broke forth) this friend of human race!

The swain reply'd. It never was our guise 65
 To flight the poor, or aught humane despise;
 For Jove unfolds our hospitable door,
 'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.

Homer thus speaks in the whole *Odyssey*: no doubt (continues that author) he does it out of love of this benevolent old servant of Ulysses, and to honour and distinguish his fidelity.

v. 66. *To flight the poor, or aught humane despise;
 For Jove unfolds our hospitable door,
 'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.]*

This passage contains an admirable lecture of morality and humanity. The person who best understood the beauty of it, and best explained the precepts it comprehends, was Epictetus, from whom Monsieur Dacier furnishes us with this explication from *Arrian*: "Keep (says that author) continually in thy memory,

Little, alas ! is all the good I can ;
 A man oppress'd, dependant, yet a man : 70
 Accept such treatment as a swain affords,
 Slave to the insolence of youthful lords !
 Far hence is by unequal gods remov'd
 That man of bounties, loving and belov'd !
 To whom whate'er his slave enjoys is ow'd, 75
 And more, had fate allow'd, had been bestow'd :

" what Eumæus speaks in Homer to the disguised Ulysses." " O friend, it is unlawful to despise the stranger ; speak thus to thy brother, father, and neighbour : it is my duty to use you with benevolence, tho' your circumstances were meaner than they are ; for you come from God." Here we see Epictetus borrowing his morality from Homer ; and philosophy embellished with the ornaments of poetry. Indeed there is scarce any writer of name among all the antients that has not been obliged to Homer, whether moralists, poets, philosophers, or legislators.

v. 75. *To whom whate'er his slave enjoys is ow'd,
 And more, had fate allow'd, ———]*

This passage has been greatly mistaken by almost all who have translated Homer : the words at first view seem to imply that Ulysses had given Eumæus a wife, a house, and an inheritance ; but this is not the meaning. The words are thus to be rendered ; " Ulysses (says Eumæus) greatly loved me, and gave me a possession ; and such things as an indulgent master gives a faithful servant ; namely, a wife, inheritance, and an house." These gifts are to be applied to Ἀναξ εὐθυμου, and not to Ulysses ; and the sentence means, that it is the custom of good kings in that manner to reward their faithful servants. It is very evident from Homer, that Ulysses had not yet given a wife to Eumæus ; for he promises him and Philætius all these rewards, lib. xxi. of the Odyssey.

Ἄξομαι ἀμφοτέροις ἀλόχῃς, ἢ κτήμα' ὅπασσιν,
 Οἰκίᾳ τ' ἐῖγδ' ἐμεῖο τεύχε' ἑμένα, καὶ μοι ἑπειλά
 Τηλεμάχῃ ἐτάρῳ τε, κασιγνήτῳ τε ἔσσεσθον.

It appears therefore that Eumæus was not married, and therefore this whole period is to be applied to the word Ἀναξ, and not to Ulysses. Eustathius.

I will only add, that in the above-mentioned verses Ulysses promises that Eumæus shall be the companion and brother of Telemachus ; an instance, that he was not a vulgar person whom Ulysses thus honours, by making him allied to the royal family.

But fate condemn'd him to a foreign shore;
 Much have I sorrow'd, but my master more.
 Now cold he lies, to death's embrace resign'd:
 Ah perish Helen! perish all her kind!
 For whose curs'd cause, in Agamemnon's name,
 He trod so fatally the paths of fame.

80

His vest succinct then girding round his waste,
 Forth rush'd the swain with hospitable haste,
 Straight to the lodgements of his herd he run,
 Where the fat porkers slept beneath the sun;
 Of two, his cutlace lanch'd the spouting blood;
 These quarter'd, findg'd, and fix'd on forks of wood,
 All hasty on the hissing coals he threw;
 And smoking back the tasteful viands drew,
 Broachers and all; then on the board display'd
 The ready meal, before Ulysses laid
 With flour imbrown'd; next mingled wine yet new,
 And luscious as the bees nectareous dew:
 Then sat companion of the friendly feast,
 With open look; and thus bespoke his guest.

85

90

95

'Take with free welcome what our hands prepare,
 Such food as falls to simple servants share;
 The best our lords consume; those thoughtless peers,
 Rich without bounty, guilty without fears!
 Yet sure the gods their impious acts detest,
 And honour justice and the righteous breast.
 Pirates and conquerors, of harden'd mind,
 The foes of peace, and scourges of mankind,
 To whom offending men are made a prey
 When Jove in vengeance gives a land away;

100

105

v. 93. *With flour imbrown'd* —] We find here a custom of antiquity: this flour was made of parched corn; when the ancients fed upon any thing that had not been offered in sacrifice, they sprinkled it with flour, which was used instead of the hallowed barley, with which they consecrated their victims. I doubt not, (since some honours were paid to the gods in all feasts) but that this sprinkling of flour by Eumæus was an act of religion. Dacier,

Ev'n these, when of their ill-got spoils possess'd,
 Find sure tormentors in the guilty breast ;
 Some voice of God close whisp'ring from within,
 " Wretch ! this is villany, and this is sin." 110
 But these, no doubt, some oracle explore,
 That tells, the great Ulysses is no more.
 Hence springs their confidence, and from our sighs
 Their rapine strengthens, and their riots rise :
 Constant as Jove the night and day bestows, 115
 Bleeds a whole hecatomb, a vintage flows.
 None match'd this hero's wealth, of all who reign
 O'er the fair islands of the neighb'ring main.
 Nor all the monarchs whose far dreaded sway
 The wide-extended continents obey : 120
 First, on the main-land, of Ulysses' breed
 Twelve herds, twelve flocks, on ocean's margin feed ;

v. 122. *Twelve herds, twelve flocks, &c.*] I have already remarked, that Ulysses was a wealthy king, and this place is an instance of it. He is master of twelve herds of oxen, which probably amounted to fourteen thousand four hundred head ; for if we count the herds by the same way of computation as the droves of swine, they will make that number, each drove consisting of twelve hundred : for though Homer mentions but three hundred and sixty boars, yet he tells us, the reason why they were inferior to the females was because of the luxury of the suitors. If this be allowed, then he had likewise the same number of sheep, and as many hogs : for Eumæus had the charge only of one herd, eleven more were under the care of other officers : Ulysses likewise had thirteen thousand two hundred goats. This will appear to be a true calculation from the words of Homer, who tells us, that twenty of the greatest heroes of the age were not so wealthy as Ulysses.

The old poets and historians, to express a person of great riches, gave him the epithet of πολυμήλων, πολυαγνών, or πολύρρητον ; that is, " a person that had a great number of sheep or cattle, or " a person of great wealth." This is likewise evident from the holy scriptures : David had his officers, like Ulysses, to attend his flocks and herds : thus 1 Chron. xxvii. Jehonathan was set over his treasures in the field, cities and villages ; Shimei over his vineyards ; Zabdi over his wines ; Baal-hanan over his olive-trees, and Joash over his oil : he had herdsmen that had charge over his cattle, sheep, camels, and asses. It was by cattle that the antient kings enriched themselves from the earliest ages : thus no less a person

As many stalls for shaggy goats are rear'd ;
 As many lodgements for the tusky herd ;
 Those foreign keepers guard : and here are seen 125
 Twelve herds of goats that graze our utmost green ;
 To native pastors is their charge assign'd ;
 And mine the care to feed the bristly kind :
 Each day the fattest bleeds of either herd,
 All to the suitors wasteful board preferr'd. 130

Thus he, benevolent ; his unknown guest
 With hunger keen devours the sav'ry feast ;
 While schemes of vengeance ripen in his breast. }
 Silent and thoughtful while the board he ey'd,
 Eumæus pours on high the purple tide ; 135
 The king with smiling looks his joy exprest,
 And thus the kind inviting host address.

Say now, what man is he, the man deplor'd,
 So rich, so potent, whom you style your lord ?
 Late with such affluence and possessions blest, 140
 And now in honour's glorious bed at rest.
 Whoever was the warrior, he must be
 To fame no stranger, nor perhaps to me ;
 Who (so the gods, and so the fates ordain'd)
 Have wander'd many a sea, and many a land. 145

Small is the faith, the prince and queen ascribe
 (Reply'd Eumæus) to the wand'ring tribe.
 For needy strangers still to flatter fly,
 And want too oft' betrays the tongue to lye.
 Each vagrant traveller that touches here, 150
 Deludes with fallacies the royal ear,

than Pharaoh, a powerful king of Ægypt, gave Joseph leave to appoint his brethren to be rulers over his cattle ; and we read in all the Greek poets, that the wealth of kings originally consisted in herds and flocks. They lose much of the pleasure of Homer who read him only as a poet : he gives us an exact image of ancient life, their manners, customs, laws, and politics ; and it must double our satisfaction, when we consider that in reading Homer we are reading the most ancient author in the world, except the great Lawgiver Moses.

To dear remembrance makes his image rise,
 And calls the springing sorrows from her eyes.
 Such thou may'st be. But he whose name you crave
 Moulders in earth, or welters on the wave, 155
 Or food for fish, or dogs, his reliques lie,
 Or torn by birds are scatter'd thro' the sky.
 So perish'd he : and left (for ever lost)
 Much woe to all, but sure to me the most.
 So mild a master never shall I find : 160
 Less dear the parents whom I left behind,
 Less soft my mother, less my father kind.
 Not with such transport wou'd my eyes run o'er,
 Again to hail them in their native shore ;
 As lov'd Ulysses once more to embrace, 165
 Restor'd and breathing in his natal place.
 That name, for ever dread, yet ever dear,
 Ev'n in his absence I pronounce with fear :
 In my respect, he bears a prince's part ;
 But lives a very brother, in my heart. 170

Thus spoke the faithful swain, and thus rejoin'd
 The master of his grief, the man of patient mind.
 Ulysses, friend ! shall view his old abodes,
 (Distrustful as thou art) nor doubt the gods.

v. 167. *That name, for ever dread, &c.*] Eustathius excellently explains the sentiment of Eumæus, which is full of tenderness and humanity. I will not call Ulysses, cries Eumæus, by the name of Ulysses, for from strangers he receives that appellation ; I will not call him my master, for as such he never was towards me ; I will then call him brother, for he always used me with the tenderness of a brother. *Ἠδιστόν* properly signifies an elder brother.

What I would further observe is, the wonderful art of Homer in exalting the character of his hero : he is the bravest and the best of men, good in every circumstance of life : valiant in war, patient in adversity, a kind father, husband, and master, as well as a mild and merciful king : by this conduct the poet deeply engages our affections in the good or ill fortune of the hero : he makes himself master of our passions, and we rejoice or grieve at his success or calamity through the whole *Odyssey*.

Nor speak I rashly, but with faith averr'd, 175
 And what I speak attesting heav'n has heard.
 If so, a cloak and vesture be my meed ;
 'Till his return, no title shall I plead, }
 'Tho' certain be my news, and great my need. }
 Whom want itself can force untruths to tell, 180
 My soul detests him as the gates of hell.

Thou first be witness, hospitable Jove !
 And ev'ry god inspiring social love !
 And witness ev'ry household pow'r that waits
 Guard of these fires, and angel of these gates ! 185
 Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
 His antient realms Ulysses shall survey,

v. 186. *Ere the next moon increase, or this decay.*] These verses have been thought to be used ænigmatically by Ulysses.

τῷ δ' αὐτῷ λυκάεαιος ἐλεύσεσθαι ἐνθάδ' Ὀδυσσεύς,
 τῷ μὲν φθίνοντος μηνός, τῷ δ' ἰσαμένειο.

In the former verse Eustathius tells us there is a various reading, and judges that it ought to be written τῷ δ' αὖ τῷ, and not τῷ δ' αὐτῷ; and it must be allowed that the repetition of τῷ gives a greater emphasis to the words, and agrees better with the vehemence of the speaker in making his asseveration.

The latter verse in the obvious sense seems to mean that Ulysses would return in the space of a month, and so Eumæus understood it; but in reality it means in the compass of a day. Solon was the first who discovered the latent sense of it, as Plutarch informs us: "Solon, says that author, observing the inequality of the months, and that the moon neither agreed with the rising or setting of the sun, but that often in the same day she over-took and went before it, named that same day *ἐν ἡ ἡνέα*, "the old and new moon;" and allotted that part of the day that preceded the conjunction, to the old moon, and the other part of it to the new; from hence we may judge that he was the first that comprehended the sense of this verse of Homer.

τῷ μὲν φθίνοντος μηνός, τῷ δ' ἰσαμένειο.

"Accordingly he named the following day, "the day of the new moon." Ulysses then means that he will return on the last day of the month, for on that day the moon is both old and new; that is, she finishes one month, and begins another." This is taken from the life of Solon; but whether the obvious sense in which Eumæus is supposed to understand it, or the latent meaning of Solon be preferable, is submitted to the reader's judgment; I

In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn,
And the lost glories of his house return.

Nor shall that meed be thine, nor ever more 190
Shall lov'd Ulysses hail this happy shore,
(Reply'd Eumæus :) to the present hour
Now turn thy thought, and joys within our pow'r.
From sad reflection let my soul repose ;
The name of him awakes a thousand woes. 195

But guard him gods ! and to these arms restore !
Not his true consort can desire him more ;
Not old Laertes, broken with despair ;
Not young Telemachus, his blooming heir.

Alas, Telemachus ! my sorrows flow 200
Afresh for thee, my second cause of woe !
Like some fair plant set by a heav'nly hand,
He grew, he flourish'd, and he blest the land ;
In all the youth his father's image shin'd,
Bright in his person, brighter in his mind. 205

What man, or god, deceiv'd his better sense,
Far on the swelling seas to wander hence ?
'To distant Pylos hapless is he gone,
'To seek his father's fate, and find his own !
For traitors wait his way, with dire design 210
To end at once the great Arcean line.

But let us leave him to their wills above ;
'The fates of men are in the hand of Jove.
And now, my venerable guest ! declare .
Your name, your parents, and your native air : 215

confess I see no occasion to have recourse to that mysterious explanation : what Ulysses intended was to certify Eumæus, that Ulysses would assuredly return very speedily ; and the verse will have this effect, if it be understood literally and plainly : besides, Ulysses is to continue in an absolute disguise ; why then should he endanger a discovery, by using an ambiguous sentence, which might possibly be understood ? But if it was so dark that it was utterly unintelligible to Eumæus, then it is used in vain, and a needless ambiguity.

Sincere from whence begun your course relate,
And to what ship I owe the friendly freight ?

Thus he : and thus (with prompt invention bold)
The cautious chief his ready story told.

On dark reserve what better can prevail, 220
Or from the fluent tongue produce the tale,
Than when two friends, alone, in peaceful place
Confer, and wines and cates the table grace ;
But most, the kind inviter's chearful face ? }
Thus might we sit, with social goblets crown'd 225
'Till the whole circle of the year goes round ;
Not the whole circle of the year wou'd close
My long narration of a life of woes.

But such was heav'n's high will ! Know then, I came
From sacred Crete, and from a fire of fame : 230

v. 229. — *Know then, I came*
From sacred Crete, —

This whole narration is a notable instance of that artful dissimulation so remarkable in the character of Ulysses, and an evidence that Homer excellently sustains it through the whole poem ; for Ulysses appears to be *πολύτροπος*, as he is represented in the first line, throughout the *Odyssey*. This narrative has been both praised and censured by the critics, especially by Rapin. I will lay his observations before the reader.

“ Homer is guilty of verbosity, and of a tedious prolix manner
“ of speaking. He is the greatest talker of all antiquity : the very
“ Greeks, though chargeable with an excess this way above all
“ nations, have reprehended Homer for his intemperance of words ;
“ he is ever upon his rehearsals, and not only of the same words,
“ but of the same things, and consequently is in a perpetual circle
“ of repetitions. It is true he always speaks naturally, but then
“ he always speaks too much : his adventures in *Ægypt*, which
“ he relates to Eumæus, are truly idle impertinent stories, purely
“ for amusement : there is no thread in his discourse, nor does it
“ seem to tend to any proposed end, but exceeds all bounds : that
“ vast fluency of speech, and those mighty overflowings of fancy,
“ make him shoot beyond the mark. Hence his draughts are too
“ accurate, and leave nothing to be performed by the imagination
“ of the reader, a fault which (as Cicero observes) *Apelles* found
“ in the antient painters.” This objection is intended only against
the fulness of Homer's expression, not against the subject of the

Castor Hylacides (that name he bore)
 Belov'd and honour'd in his native shore ;
 Blest in his riches, in his children more.

}
 }

narration ; for Rapin in another place speaking of the beauties of Homer, gives this very story as an instance of his excellency. These are his words :

“ I shall say nothing of all the relations which Ulysses makes
 “ to Eumæus upon his return to his country, and his wonderful
 “ management to bring about his re-establishment ; that whole
 “ story is drest in colours so decent, and at the same time so noble,
 “ that antiquity can hardly match any part of the narration.”

If what Rapin remarks in the latter period be true, Homer will easily obtain a pardon for the fault of prolixity, imputed to him in the afore-mentioned objection. For who would be willing to retrench one of the most decent and noble narrations of antiquity, merely for the length of it ? But it may, perhaps, be true that this story is not impertinent, but well suited to carry on the design of Ulysses, and consequently tends to a proposed end : for in this consists the strength of Rapin's objection.

Nothing is more evident than that the whole success of Ulysses depends upon his disguise ; a discovery would be fatal to him, and at once give a single unassisted person into the power of his enemies. How then is this disguise to be carried on ? especially when Ulysses in person is required to give an account of his own story ? Must it not be by assuming the name of another person, and giving a plausible relation of his life, fortunes, and calamities, that brought him to a strange country, where he has no acquaintance or friend ? This obliges him to be circumstantial, nothing giving a greater air of probability than descending to particularities, and this necessitates his prolixity. The whole relation is comprehended in the compass of an hundred and seventy lines ; and an episode of no greater length may not perhaps deserve to be called verbose, if compared with the length of the Odyssey : nay, there may be a reason given why it ought to be of a considerable length : there is a pause in the action, while Minerva passes from Ithaca to Telemachus in Lacedæmon : this interval is to be filled up with some incident relating to Ulysses, until Telemachus is prepared to return ; for his assistance is necessary to re-establish the affairs of Ulysses. This then is a time of leisure, and the poet fills it up with the narrations of Ulysses till the return of Telemachus, and consequently there is room for a long relation. Besides (remarks Eustathius) Homer interests all men of all ages in the story, by giving us pieces of true history, antient customs, and exact descriptions of persons and places, instructive and delightful to all the world, and these incidents are adorned with all the embellishments of eloquence and poetry,

Sprung of a handmaid, from a bought embrace,
 I shar'd his kindness with his lawful race : 235
 But when that fate, which all must undergo,
 From earth remov'd him to the shades below ;
 The large domain his greedy sons divide,
 And each was portion'd as the lots decide.
 Little alas ! was left my wretched share, 240
 Except a house, a covert from the air :
 But what by niggard fortune was deny'd,
 A willing widow's copious wealth supply'd.
 My valour was my plea, a gallant mind
 That, true to honour, never lagg'd behind, 245 }
 (The sex is ever to a soldier kind.)
 Now wasting years my former strength confound,
 And added woes have bow'd me to the ground ;
 Yet by the stubble you may guess the grain,
 And mark the ruins of no vulgar man. 250
 Me, Pallas gave to lead the martial storm,
 And the fair ranks of battle to deform :
 Me, Mars inspir'd to turn the foe to flight,
 And tempt the secret ambush of the night.
 Let ghastly death in all his forms appear, 255
 I saw him not ; it was not mine to fear.
 Before the rest I rais'd my ready steel ;
 The first I met, he yielded, or he fell.

v. 234. *Sprung of a handmaid* —] Ulysses says he was the son of a concubine : this was not a matter of disgrace among the ancients, concubinage being allowed by the laws

The sons cast lots for their patrimony, an evidence that this was the practice of the antient Greeks. Hence an inheritance had the name *κληρονομία*, that is, from the lots ; parents put it to the decision of the lot, to avoid the envy and imputation of partiality in the distribution of their estates. It has been judged that the poet writes according to the Athenian laws, at least this custom prevailed in the days of Solon ; for he forbid parents who had several legitimate sons to make a will, but ordained that all the legitimate sons should have an equal share of their father's effects, Eustathius,

But works of peace my soul disdain'd to bear,
The rural labour, or domestic care.

260

To raise the mast, the missile dart to wing,
And send swift arrows from the bounding string,
Were arts the gods made grateful to my mind ;
Those gods, who turn (to various ends design'd)
The various thoughts and talents of mankind.

265 }

Before the Grecians touch'd the Trojan plain,
Nine times commander or by land or main,
In foreign fields I spread my glory far,

Great in the praise, rich in the spoils of war :

Thence charg'd with riches, as increas'd in fame, 270
To Crete return'd, an honourable name.

But when great Jove that direful war decreed,

Which rous'd all Greece, and made the mighty bleed ;

Our states myself and Idomen employ

To lead their fleets, and carry death to Troy. 275

Nine years we warr'd ; the tenth saw Ilion fall ;

Homeward we sail'd, but heav'n dispers'd us all.

One only month my wife enjoy'd my stay ;

So will'd the god who gives and takes away.

v. 259. ——— *My soul disdain'd to bear,*
The rural labour ———]

Plutarch, in his comparison of Aristides and Cato, cites these verses,

——— ἔργον δὲ μοι ὁ φίλον ἔσκεν.
Οὐδ' οἰκωφελίη, &c.

and tells us, that they who neglect their private and domestic concerns, usually draw their subsistence from violence and rapine. This is certainly a truth : men are apt to supply their wants, occasioned by idleness, by plunder and injustice : but it is as certain that no reflection is intended to be cast upon this way of living by Ulysses, for in his age piracy was not only allowable, but glorious ; and sudden inroads and incursions were practised by the greatest heroes. Homer therefore only intends to shew that the disposition of Ulysses inclined him to pursue the more dangerous, but more glorious, way of living by war, than the more lucrative, but more secure method of life, by agriculture and husbandry.

Nine ships I mann'd, equipp'd with ready stores, 280
 Intent to voyage to th' Ægyptian shores ;
 In feast and sacrifice my chosen train
 Six days consum'd ; the seventh we plough'd the main.
 Crete's ample fields diminish to our eye ;
 Before the Boreal blasts the vessels fly ; 285
 Safe thro' the level seas we sweep our way ;
 The steer-man governs, and the ships obey.
 The fifth fair morn we stem th' Ægyptian tide,
 And tilting o'er the bay the vessels ride :
 To anchor there my fellows I command, 290
 And spies commission to explore the land.
 But sway'd by lust of gain, and headlong will,
 The coasts they ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies,
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise. 295
 The red'ning dawn reveals the circling fields
 Horrid with bristly spears, and glancing shields.
 Jove thunder'd on their side. Our guilty head
 We turn'd to flight ; the gathering vengeance spread }
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lie dead. 300 }
 I then explor'd my thought, what course to prove ?
 (And sure the thought was dictated by Jove,
 Oh had he left me to that happier doom,
 And sav'd a life of miseries to come !)
 The radiant helmet from my brows unlac'd, 305
 And low on earth my shield and javelin cast,
 I meet the monarch with a suppliant's face,
 Approach his chariot, and his knees embrace.
 He heard, he sav'd, he plac'd me at his side ;
 My state he pity'd, and my tears he dry'd, 310
 Restrain'd the rage the vengeful foe express,
 And turn'd the deadly weapons from my breast.
 Pious ! to guard the hospitable rite,
 And fearing Jove, whom mercy's works delight.

Book XIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 231

In Ægypt thus with peace and plenty blest,
I liv'd (and happy still had liv'd) a guest,
On sev'n bright years successive blessings wait;
The next chang'd all the colour of my fate.

A false Phœnician of insidious mind,
Vers'd in vile arts, and foe to humankind, 320
With semblance fair invites me to his home;

I seiz'd the proffer (ever fond to roam)
Domestic in his faithless roof I stay'd,
'Till the swift sun his annual circle made.

To Lybia then he meditates the way;
With guileful art a stranger to betray, 325
And sell to bondage in a foreign land:

Much doubting, yet compell'd, I quit the strand.
Thro' the mid seas the nimble pinnace sails,
Aloof from Crete, before the northern gales: 330

But when remote her chalky cliffs we lost,
And far from ken of any other coast,
When all was wild expanse of sea and air;
Then doom'd high Jove due vengeance to prepare.

He hung a night of horrors o'er their head, 335
(The shaded ocean blacken'd as it spread)

He lanch'd the fiery bolt; from pole to pole
Broad burst the lightnings, deep the thunders roll;
In giddy rounds the whirling ship is tost,
And all in clouds of smoth'ring sulphur lost. 340

As from a hanging rock's tremendous height,
The fable crows with intercepted flight
Drop endlong; scar'd, and black with sulph'rous hue:
So from the deck are hurl'd the ghastly crew.

Such end the wicked found! But Jove's intent 345
Was yet to save th' oppress'd and innocent.

Plac'd on the mast (the last recourse of life)
With winds and waves I held unequal strife;
For nine long days the billows tilting o'er,
The tenth soft wafts me to Thesprotia's shore. 350

The monarch's son a shipwreckt wretch reliev'd,
 The fire with hospitable rites receiv'd,
 And in his palace like a brother plac'd,
 With gifts of price and gorgeous garments grac'd.
 While here I sojourn'd, oft' I heard the fame 355
 How late Ulysses to the country came,
 How lov'd, how honour'd in this court he stay'd,
 And here his whole collected treasure lay'd;
 I saw myself the vast unnumber'd store
 Of steel elab'rate, and refulgent ore, 360
 And brass high heap'd amidst the regal dome;
 Immense supplies for ages yet to come!
 Meantime he voyag'd to explore the will
 Of Jove on high Dodona's holy hill,

v. 363. — *He voyag'd to explore the will
 Of Jove on high Dodona's holy hill.]*

These oaks of Dodona were held to be oraculous, and to be endued with speech, by the antients; and pigeons were supposed to be the priestesses of the deity. Herodotus in Euterpe gives a full account of what belongs to this oracle, who tells us, that he was informed by the priestesses of Dodona, that two black pigeons flew away from Thebes in Ægypt, and one of them perching upon a tree in Dodona, admonished the inhabitants, with a human voice, to erect an oracle in that place to Jupiter. But Herodotus solves this fable after the following manner. "There were two priestesses carried away from Ægypt, and one of them was sold by the Phœnicians in Greece, where she in her servitude consecrated an altar to Jupiter under an oak; the Dodonæans gave her the name of a pigeon, because she was a barbarian, and her speech at first no more understood than the chattering of a bird or pigeon; but as soon as she had learned the Greek tongue, it was presently reported that the pigeon spoke with an human voice. She had the epithet black, because she was an Ægyptian."

Eustathius informs us, that Dodona was antiently a city of Thesprotia; and in process of time the limits of it being changed, it became of the country of the Molossians, that is, it lay between Thessaly and Epirus. Near this city was a mountain named Tmarus or Timourus: on this mountain there stood a temple, and within the precincts of it were these oraculous oaks of Jupiter: this was the most antient temple of Greece, according to Herodotus, founded by the Pelasgians, and at first served by priests called Selli; and the goddess Dione being joined with Jupiter in the wor-

What means might best his safe return avail, 365

To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail ?

Full oft' has Phidon, whilst he pour'd the wine,

Attesting solemn all the powr's divine,

That soon Ulysses would return, declar'd,

The sailors waiting, and the ships prepar'd. 370

But first the king dismiss'd me from his shores,

For fair Dulichium crown'd with fruitful stores ;

To good Acastus' friendly care consign'd :

But other counsels pleas'd the sailors mind :

ship, the service was performed by three aged priestesses, called in the Molossian tongue *πέλειαι*, as old men were called *πῆλαιοι*, (perhaps from the corrupted word *πάλαιοι*, or antients) and the same word *πέλειαι* signifying also pigeons, gave occasion to the fable of the temple of Dodona having doves for priestesses. But if, as Herodotus affirms, the Phœnicians sold this priestess of Jupiter originally to the Greeks, it is probable they were called doves, after the Phœnician language, in which the same word, with a small alteration, signifies both a dove and a priestess. See note on v. 75. of the twelfth Odyssey.

Eustathius gives us another solution of this difficulty, and tells us, that as there were *πορακομάντις*, or augurs, who drew predictions from the flight and gestures of crows ; so there were others who predicted from observations made upon doves ; and from hence these doves were called the prophetesses of Dodona, that being the way by which the decrees of the gods were discovered by the augurs.

I have remarked, that the temple of Dodona stood upon the mountain Timourus ; hence the word *τίμυραι* came to signify those oracles, and thus *τίμυρῶν* is used by Lycophron. Now Homer in another place writes,

Εἴ γε μὲν αἰνήσουσιν Διὸς μετ' Ἀλκίον Θέμιτες.

Strabo therefore, instead of *Θέμιτες*, reads *τίμυραι* ; for, observes that author, the oracles, not the laws of Jupiter, are preserved at Dodona. Eustathius.

But whence arose the fable of these oaks being vocal ? I doubt not but this was an illusion of those who gave out the oracles to the people : they concealed themselves within the cavities or hollow of the oaks, and from thence delivered their oracles ; and imposing by this method upon the superstition and credulity of those ages, persuaded the world that the gods gave a voice and utterance to the oaks.

I refer the reader, for a larger account of those Dodonæan oracles, to the annotations upon book xvi. verse 285. of the Iliad.

New frauds were plotted by the faithless train, 375
And misery demands me once again.

Soon as remote from shore they plough the wave,
With ready hands they rush to seize their slave ;
Then with these tatter'd rags they wrapt me round,
(Stript of my own) and to the vessel bound. 380

At eve, at Ithaca's delightful land
The ship arriv'd : forth-issuing on the sand,
They sought repast ; while to th' unhappy kind,
The pitying gods themselves my chains unbind.
Soft I descended, to the sea apply'd 385

My naked breast, and shot along the tide.
Soon past beyond their sight, I left the flood,
And took the spreading shelter of the wood.
Their prize escap'd the faithless pirates mourn'd ;
But deem'd enquiry vain, and to their ship return'd. 390
Screen'd by protecting gods from hostile eyes,
They led me to a good man and a wife ;
To live beneath thy hospitable care,
And wait the woes heav'n dooms me yet to bear.

v. 391. *Screen'd by protecting gods from hostile eyes,
They led me to a good man and a wife.]*

This is a very artful compliment which Ulysses pays to Eumæus ;
“ The gods guided me to the habitation of a person of wisdom,”
and names not Eumæus, leaving it to him to apply it.

I doubt not but the reader agrees with Ulysses as to the character
of Eumæus ; there is an air of piety to the gods in all he speaks,
and benevolence to mankind ; he is faithful to his king, upright
in his trust, and hospitable to the stranger.

Dacier is of opinion, that ἀνδρὸς ἐπισταμένοιο takes in virtue as
well as wisdom ; and indeed Homer frequently joins νόηματα ἡδὲ
δίκαιοι, and ἀδάημονες ἡδὲ δίκαιοι ; that is, wisdom and virtue, folly
and impiety, throughout the *Odyssey*. “ For never, never wicked
“ man was wise.” Virtue in a great measure depends upon edu-
cation : it is a science, and may be learned like other sciences ; in
reality there is no knowledge that deserves the name, without vir-
tue ; if virtue be wanting, science becomes artifice : as Plato de-
monstrates from Homer ; who, though he is an enemy to this poet,
has enriched his writings with his sentiments.

v. 394. *And wait the woes heav'n dooms me yet to bear.]* It may
not perhaps be unsatisfactory to see how Ulysses keeps in sight of
truth through this whole fabulous story.

Unhappy guest! whose sorrows touch my mind! 395
(Thus good Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd)

For real suff'rings since I grieve sincere,
Check not with fallacies the springing tear;
Nor turn the passion into groundless joy
For him, whom heav'n has destin'd to destroy. 400
Oh! had he perisht on some well-fought day,
Or in his friends embraces dy'd away!

That grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
Historic marbles, to record his praise:

His praise, eternal on the faithful stone, 405
Had with transmissive honours grac'd his son.

Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost!

While pensive in this solitary den,
Far from gay cities, and the ways of men, 410

He gives a true account of his being at the war of Troy; he stays seven years in Ægypt, so long he continued with Calypso; the king of Ægypt, whose name Eustathius tells us was Sethon, according to the antients, entertains him hospitably like that goddess; a Phœnician detains him a whole year; the same has been observed of Circe; the vessel of this Phœnician is lost by a storm, and all the crew perishes except Ulysses. The same is true of the companions of Ulysses: he is thrown upon the land of the Thesprotians by that tempest, and received courteously by Phidon, the king of that country; this represents his being cast upon the Phæacian shore by the storm, and the hospitable Phidon means Alcinous, king of the Phæacians: the manner likewise of his being introduced to Phidon, agrees with his introduction to Alcinous; the daughter introduces him to Alcinous, and the son to Phidon. Thus we see there is a "concordia discors" through the whole narration, the poet only changing the names of persons and places. Ulysses lay under an absolute necessity thus to falsify his true history, and represent himself as a stranger to the whole island of Ithaca, otherwise it would have been natural for Eumæus to offer to guide him to his friends, upon which a discovery must inevitably have followed, which would have proved fatal to that hero.

v. 407. *Now snatch'd by harpies* ———] This place seems to evince, that the expression of being torn by the harpies, means that the dead person is deprived of the rites of sepulture; and not as Dacier understands it, that he is disappeared, or that it is unknown what is become of him: for the whole lamentation of Eumæus turns upon this point, namely, that Ulysses is dead, and deprived of the funeral ceremonies.

I linger life ; nor to the court repair,
 But when the constant queen commands my care ;
 Or when, to taste her hospitable board,
 Some guest arrives, with rumours of her lord ;
 And these indulge their want, and those their woe, 415
 And here the tears, and there the goblets flow.
 By many such have I been warn'd ; but chief
 By one Ætolian robb'd of all belief,

v. 411. ——— *Nor to the court repair,
 But when the queen ———]*

It may appear, at first view, as if Eumæus thought his absence from the court an aggravation to his calamities ; but this is not his meaning : he speaks thus to prevent Ulysses from asking him to introduce him immediately to Penelope ; and this is the reason why he enlarges upon the story of the Ætolian, who had deceived him by raising his expectations of the immediate return of Ulysses.

It is remarkable, that almost all these fictions are made by Cretans, or have some relation to the island of the Cretans : thus Ulysses feigns himself to be of Crete, and this Ætolian lays the scene of his falsehood in the same island : which, as Eustathius observes, may possibly be a latent satyr upon that people, who were become a reproach and proverb for their remarkable lying. This agrees exactly with the character given them by St. Paul from Epimenides.

Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται.

And κρηλίζειν signifies to lie.

St. Chrysostom fills up the broken verse thus,

——— ἢ γὰρ τάφον, ὃ ἀνα, σείο
 Κρήτες ἐτεκλήναντο, σὺ δ' ἔδάνες, ἐπὶ γὰρ αἰεὶ.

But this is added from Callimachus in his hymn to Jupiter, thus translated by Mr. Prior,

The Cretan boasts thy natal place : but oft',
 He meets reproof deserv'd : for he presumptuous
 Has built a tomb for thee, who never know'st
 To die, but liv'st the same to day and ever.

That the latter part of these verses belongs not to Epimenides, is evident, for St. Paul quotes the verse thus :

Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, καὶ ἀπιστοί.

The two last words are not in Callimachus, and consequently the rest is only a conjectural and erroneous addition.

Book XIV. HOMER'S ODYSSEY. 237

Whose hap it was to this our roof to roam,
For murder banish'd from his native home, 420
He swore, Ulysses on the coast of Crete
Staid but a season to refit his fleet;

A few revolving months shou'd waft him o'er,
Franght with bold warriours, and a boundless store.
O thou! whom age has taught to understand, 425
And heav'n has guided with a fav'ring hand!
On God or mortal to obtrude a lie
Forbear, and dread to flatter, as to die.

Not for such ends my house and heart are free,
But dear respect to Jove, and charity. 430

And why, oh swain of unbelieving mind!
(Thus quick reply'd the wisest of mankind)
Doubt you my oath? yet more my faith to try,
A solemn compact let us ratify,
And witness ev'ry pow'r that rules the sky! 435 }

If here Ulysses from his labours rest,
Be then my prize a tunic and a vest;
And, where my hopes invite me, straight transport
In safety to Dulichium's friendly court.
But if he greets not thy desiring eye, 440 }
Hurl me from yon' dread precipice on high;
The due reward of fraud and perjury. }

Doubtless, oh guest! great laud and praise were mine
(Reply'd the swain for spotless faith divine)

If, after social rites and gifts bestow'd, 445
I stain'd my hospitable hearth with blood,

How would the gods my righteous toils succeed,
And bless the hand that made a stranger bleed?
No more—th' approaching hours of silent night
First claim refection, then to rest invite; 450

Beneath our humble cottage let us haste,
And here, unenvy'd, rural dainties taste.

Thus commun'd these; while to their lowly dome
The full-fed swine return'd with evening home;

Compell'd, reluctant, to their sev'ral flies, 455
 With din'obstreperous, and ungrateful cries.
 Then to the slaves—Now from the herd the best
 Select, in honour of our foreign guest :
 With him, let us the genial banquet share,
 For great and many are the griefs we bear ; 460
 While those who from our labours heap their board,
 Blaspheme their feeder, and forget their lord.

Thus speaking, with dispatchful hand he took
 A weighty ax, and cleft the solid oak ;
 This on the earth he pil'd ; a boar full fed 465
 Of five years age, before the pile was led :
 The swain, whom acts of piety delight,
 Observant of the gods, begins the rite ;
 First shears the forehead of the bristly boar,
 And suppliant stands, invoking ev'ry pow'r 470
 To speed Ulysses to his native shore.

v. 455. *Compell'd, reluctant, to their sev'ral flies,
 With din obstreperous, and ungrateful cries.]*

There is scarce a more sonorous verse in the whole *Odyssey*.

Κλαγγὴ δ' ἄσπελον ὤρετο συὼν αὐλιζομέναων.

The word swine is what debases our idea ; which is evident, if we substitute “shepherd” in the room of “hogherd,” and apply to it the most pompous epithet given by Homer to Eumæus. For instance, to say δῖος, or the illustrious hogherd, is mean enough : but the image is more tolerable when we say, the illustrious shepherd ; the office of a shepherd (especially as it is familiarized and dignified in poetry by the frequent use of it) being in repute. The Greeks have magnificent words to express the most common objects ; we want words of equal dignity, and have the disadvantage of being obliged to endeavour to raise a subject that is now in the utmost contempt, so as to guard it from meanness and ignominy.

v. 469. *First shears the forehead of the bristly boar.]* I have already observed, that every meal among the antients was a kind of sacrifice of thanksgiving to the gods ; and the table, as it were, an altar.

This sacrifice being different from any other in Homer, I will fully describe the particulars of it from Eustathius. It is a rural sacrifice ; we have before seen sacrifices in camps, in courts, and in cities, in the *Iliad* ; but this is the only one of this nature in all Homer.

A knotty stake then aiming at his head,
 Down dropp'd he groaning, and the spirit fled.
 The scorching flames climb round on ev'ry side:
 Then the findg'd members they with skill divide; 475
 On these, in rolls of fat involv'd with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from ev'ry part.
 Some in the flames, bestrow'd with flour, they threw:
 Some cut in fragments, from the forks they drew:
 These while on sev'ral tables they dispose, 480
 As priest himself, the blameless rustic rose;
 Expert the destin'd victim to dis-part
 In sev'n just portions, pure of hand and heart.
 One sacred to the nymphs apart they lay;
 Another to the winged son of May: 485

They cut off the hair of the victim, in commemoration of the original way of cloathing, which was made of hair, and the skins of beasts.

Eumæus strows flour upon it; in remembrance, that before incense was in use, this was the antient manner of offering to the gods, or as Dacier observes, of consecrating the victim, instead of the barley mixed with salt, which had the name of immolation.

Eumæus cut a piece from every part of the victim; by this he made it an holocaust, or an intire sacrifice.

Eumæus divides the rest at supper; which was always the office of the most honourable person; and thus we see Achilles and other heroes employed throughout the Iliad. He portions it into seven parts; one he allots to Mercury and the nymphs, and the rest he reserves for himself, Ulysses, and his four servants. He gives the chine to Ulysses, which was ever reputed an honour and distinction; thus Ajax after a victory over Hector, is rewarded in the same manner.

Νῶτοισι δ' Ἀλὰντα διμενέεσσι γέγασιεν
 Ἀργείδης.

v. 484. *One sacred to the nymphs ————
 Another to the winged son of May.]*

It may be asked why Eumæus allots part of the victim to Mercury and the nymphs, since there is nothing of the like nature to be found in the whole Iliad and Odyssey? This is done in compliance to the place and person of Eumæus, whose employment lies in the country, and who has the care of the herds of Ulysses; he therefore offers to the nymphs, as they are the presidents of the fountains, rivers, groves, and furnish sustenance and food for cattle:

The rural tribe in common share the rest,
 The king the chine, the honour of the feast,
 Who sat delighted at his servant's board;
 The faithful servant joy'd his unknown lord.
 Oh be thou dear (Ulysses cry'd) to Jove,
 As well thou claim'st a grateful stranger's love!

490

Be then thy thanks, (the bounteous swain reply'd)
 Enjoyment of the good the gods provide.
 From God's own hand descend our joys and woes;
 These he decrees, and he but suffers those:
 All pow'r is his, and whatsoe'er he wills,
 The will itself, omnipotent, fulfills.
 This said, the first fruits to the gods he gave;
 Then pour'd of offer'd wine the sable wave:
 In great Ulysses' hand he plac'd the bowl,
 He sat, and sweet refection chear'd his soul.
 The bread from canisters Mesaulius gave,
 (Eumæus' proper treasure bought this slave,
 And led from Taphos, to attend his board,
 A servant added to his absent lord)

495

500

505

and Mercury was held by the antients to be the patron of shepherds. Thus Simonides,

Θύειν Νύμφαις ἔχ' Μαιάδος τόκῳ

Οὔτοι γὰρ ἀνδρῶν αἶμα ἔχῃσι ποιμαίνων.

Eustathius adds, (from whom this is taken) that Mercury was a lucrative god, and therefore Eumæus sacrifices to him for increase of his herds: or because he was δόλιος ἑρμῆς, and, like Ulysses, master of all the arts of cunning and dissimulation, and then Eumæus may be understood to offer to him for the safety of Ulysses, that he might furnish him with artifice to bring him in security to his country; and we see this agrees with his prayer.

What Dacier adds is yet more to the purpose. Eumæus joins Mercury with the nymphs because he was patron of flocks, and the antients generally placed the figure of a ram at the base of his images; sometimes he is represented carrying a ram upon his arms, sometimes upon his shoulders: in short, it suffices that he was esteemed a rural deity, to make the sacrifice proper to be offered to him by a person whose occupation lay in the country.

v. 504. *And led from Taphos* ———] This custom of purchasing slaves prevailed over all the world, as appears not only from

His task it was the wheaten loaves to lay,
And from the banquet take the bowls away.
And now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
And each betakes him to his couch to rest.

many places of Homer, but of the holy Scriptures, in which mention is made of slaves bought with money. The Taphians lived in a small island adjacent to Ithaca; Mentès was king of it, as appears from the first of the *Odyssey*: they were generally pirates, and are supposed to have had their name from their way of living, which in the Phœnician tongue (as Bochart observes) signifies rapine; Hataph, and by contraction Taph, bearing that signification.

Frequent use has been made of Phœnician interpretations through the course of these notes, and perhaps it may be judged necessary to say something why they may be supposed to give names to countries and persons, more than any other nation.

They are reported to be the inventors of letters, Lucan, lib. iii.

“ Phœnices primi, famæ si creditur, ausi

“ Mansuram rudibus vocem signare figuris.”

and were the greatest navigators in the world. Dionysius says they were the first,

Οἱ πρῶτοι νήσσιν ἐπειρήσαντο θαλάσσης,

Πρῶτοι δ' ἐμπορίας ἀλιδίνεος ἐμνήσαντο.

“The first who used navigation, the first who trafficked by the “ocean.” If we put these two qualities together, it is no wonder that a great number of places were called by Phœnician names: for they being the first navigators, must necessarily discover a multitude of islands, countries, and cities, to which they would be obliged to give names when they described them. And nothing is so probable, as that they gave those names according to the observations they made upon the nature of the several countries, or employment of the inhabitants. In the present instance, the Taphians being remarkable pirates, (as appears from Homer,

——— Τάφιοι λήϊστορες ἄνδρες

——— λήϊστῆρσιν ἐπισπόμενος Ταφιοῖσι.)

The Phœnicians, who first discovered this island, called it Taph, the island of pirates. Places receive appellations according to the language of the discoverer, and generally from observations made upon the people. It will add a weight to this supposition, if we remember that Homer was well acquainted with the traditions and customs of the Phœnicians; for he speaks frequently of that people through the course of the *Odyssey*.

Now came the night, and darkness cover'd o'er 510
The face of things; the winds began to roar;

v. 510. *Now came the night, —————
————— the winds began to roar; &c.]*

Eustathius observes, that Homer introduces the following story by a very artful connexion, and makes it, as it were, grow out of the subject: the coldness of the present season brings to his mind a time like it, when he lay before Troy.

It is remarkable, that almost all poets have taken an opportunity to give long descriptions of the night; Virgil, Statius, Apollonius, Tasso, and Dryden, have enlarged upon this subject: Homer seems industriously to have avoided it: perhaps he judged such descriptions to be no more than excrescencies, and at best but beautiful superfluities. A modern hypercritic thinks Mr. Dryden to have excelled all the poets in this point.

All things are hush'd as nature's self lay dead,
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head, &c.

The last verse is translated from Statius,

“ Et simulant fessos curvata cacumina somnos.”

which I mention only to propose it to consideration, whether “cacumina” must, in this place, of necessity signify the tops of mountains; why may it not be applied, as it is frequently, to the tops of the trees? I question whether the nodding of a mountain, or the appearance of its nodding, be a natural image: whereas if we understand it of the trees, the difficulty vanishes; and the meaning will be much more easy, that the very trees seem to nod, as in sleep.

I beg the reader's patience to mention another verse of Statius, that has been undoubtedly mistaken.

“ Qualis ubi audito venantum murmure Tigris,
“ Horruit in maculas.” —————

Which Cowley renders,

————— he swells with angry pride,
And calls forth all his spots on ev'ry side.

In which sense also, the author of the Spectator quotes it from Cowley. But it is impossible to imagine that the hair of any creature can change into spots; and if any creature could change it by anger, would not the spots remain when the passion was over? The assertion is absolutely against nature, and matter of fact; and as absurd as to affirm that the hair of a tiger blushes. This mistake arises from the double sense of the word “maculæ,” which signifies also the meshes of a net, as any common dictionary will inform us. So Tully, “Reticulum minutis maculis;” Columella,

The driving storm the wat'ry west-wind pours,
And Jove descends in deluges of show'rs.
Studious of rest and warmth, Ulysses lies,
Foreseeing from the first the storm wou'd rise; 515
In mere necessity of coat and cloak,
With artful preface to his host he spoke.

Hear me, my friends! who this good banquet grace;
'Tis sweet to play the fool in time and place,
And wine can of their wits the wise beguile, 520
Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile,
The grave in merry measures frisk about,
And many a long repented word bring out.
Since to be talkative I now commence,
Let wit cast off the fullen yoke of sense. 525

Once I was strong (wou'd heav'n restore those days)
And with my betters claim'd a share of praise.
Ulysses, Menelaus led forth a band,
And join'd me with them, ('twas their own command;)
A deathful ambush for the foe to lay, 530
Beneath Troy walls by night we took our way:
There, clad in arms, along the marshes spread,
We made the osier-fringed bank our bed.
Full soon th' inclemency of heav'n I feel,
Nor had these shoulders cov'ring, but of steel. 535
Sharp blew the north; snow whitening all the fields
Froze with the blast, and gath'ring glaz'd our shields.
There all but I, well fenc'd with cloak and vest,
Lay cover'd by their ample shields at rest.

"Rete grandi macula;" Ovid, "Distinctum maculis re'e."
This way the sense is obvious; no wonder that a tiger, when
enclosed in the toils, should "horrere in maculis," or erect his
hair when he flies against the meshes, endeavouring to escape;
and it agrees with the nature of that animal, to roughen his hair
when he is angry. I beg the reader's pardon for all this; but
the mention of a hypercritic was infecting, and led me into it
unaware.

Fool that I was! I left behind my own; 540 }
 The skill of weather and of winds unknown,
 And trusted to my coat and shield alone!
 When now was wasted more than half the night,
 And the stars faded at approaching light;
 Sudden I jogg'd Ulysses, who was laid 545
 Fast by my side, and shiv'ring thus I said.

Here longer in this field I cannot lie,
 The winter pinches, and with cold I die,
 And die asham'd (oh wisest of mankind)
 The only fool who left his cloak behind. 550

He thought, and answer'd: hardly waking yet,
 Sprung in his mind the momentary wit;
 (That wit, which or in council, or in fight,
 Still met th' emergence, and determin'd right)
 Hush thee, he cry'd, (soft whispering in my ear) 555
 Speak not a word, lest any Greek may hear —
 And then (supporting on his arm his head)
 Hear me, companions! (thus aloud he said)
 Methinks too distant from the fleet we lie:
 Ev'n now a vision stood before my eye, 560 }
 And sure the warning vision was from high:

v. 540. *I left behind my cloak, &c.*] To understand this passage, we must remember, that in those eastern regions, after very hot days, an extreme cold night would sometimes succeed, even with frost and snow, contrary to the usual order of the season. If it had been winter, no doubt Ulysses would have armed himself against the nocturnal cold, and not have been reduced to such an extremity.

There is one incident in this story that seems extraordinary: Ulysses and Menelaus are said to form an ambush under the very walls of Troy, and yet are described to be sleeping while they thus form it. The words are, *εὔδον εὐκνηλοι*. *Εὔδον* does not necessarily signify to be asleep, as is already proved from the conclusion of the first Iliad: but here it must have that import; for Ulysses tells his companions, that he has had an extraordinary dream. Besides, even a tendency towards sleep should be avoided by soldiers in an ambuscade, especially by the leaders of it. The only answer that occurs to me is, that perhaps they had centinels waking while they slept; but even this would be unfoldier-like in our age,

Let from among us some swift courier rise,
Haste to the gen'ral, and demand supplies.

Upstart'd Thoas straight, Andræmon's son,
Nimble he rose, and cast his garment down; 565
Instant, the racer vanish'd off the ground;
That instant, in his cloak I wrapt me round:
And safe I slept, till brightly-dawning shone
The morn, conspicuous on her golden throne.

Oh were my strength as then, as then my age! 570
Some friend would fence me from the winter's rage.

Yet tatter'd as I look, I challeng'd then
The honours, and the offices of men:
Some master, or some servant would allow
A cloak and vest — but I am nothing now! 575

Well hast thou spoke (rejoin'd th' attentive swain)
Thy lips let fall no idle word or vain!
Nor garment shalt thou want, nor ought beside,
Meet, for the wand'ring suppliant to provide.
But in the morning take thy cloaths again, 580
For here one vest suffices ev'ry swain;

581. *But in the morning take thy cloaths again.*] This is not spoken in vain, it was necessary for Ulysses to appear in the form of a beggar, to prevent discovery.

The word in the Greek is *δνοπαλίζεις*, which it is impossible to translate without a circumlocution. It paints (observes Eustathius) exactly the dress of a beggar, and the difficulty he labours under in drawing his rags to cover one part of his body that is naked, and while he covers that, leaving the other part bare: *δνοπαλίζεις* is *ταῖς πελάμασι δονήσεις* or *δινήσεις*, and expresses how a beggar is embarrassed in the act of covering his body, by reason of the rents in his cloaths.

v. 583. *For here one vest suffices ev'ry swain, &c.*] It is not at first view evident, why Ulysses requests a change of raiment from Eumæus, for a better dress would only have exposed him to the danger of a discovery. Besides, this would have been a direct opposition to the injunctions of the goddess of wisdom, who had not only disguised him in the habit of a beggar, but changed his features to a conformity with it. Why then should he make this petition? The answer is, to carry on his disguise the better before Eumæus; he has already told him that he was once a person of dignity, though now reduced to poverty by calamities: and con-

No change of garments to our hinds is known :
 But when return'd, the good Ulysses' son
 With better hand shall grace with fit attires
 His guest, and send thee where thy soul desires. 585

The honest herdsman rose, as this he said,
 And drew before the hearth the stranger's bed :
 The fleecy spoils of sheep, a goat's rough hide
 He spreads ; and adds a mantle thick and wide ;
 With store to heap above him, and below, 590
 And guard each quarter as the tempests blow.
 There lay the king, and all the rest supine ;
 All, but the careful master of the swine :
 Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care :
 Well arm'd, and fenc'd against nocturnal air ; 595

seemingly a person who had once known better fortunes, would be uneasy under such mean circumstances, and desire to appear like himself ; therefore he asks a better dress, that Eumæus may believe his former story.

What Eumæus speaks of not having many changes of garments, is not a sign of poverty, but of the simplicity of the manners of those ages. It is the character of the luxurious, vain Phæacians, to delight in changes of dress, and agrees not with this plain, sincere, industrious Ithacan, Eumæus.

I wonder this last part of the relation of Ulysses has escaped the censure of the critics: the circumstance of getting the cloak of Thoas in the cold night, though it shews the artifice of Ulysses essential to his character, yet perhaps may be thought unworthy the majesty of epic poetry, where every thing ought to be great and magnificent. It is of such a nature as to raise a smile, rather than admiration ; and Virgil has utterly rejected such levities. Perhaps it may be thought that Ulysses adapts himself to Eumæus, and endeavours to engage his favour by that piece of pleasantry ; yet this does not solve the objection, for Eumæus is not a person of a low character: no one in the *Odyssey* speaks with better sense, or better morality. One would almost imagine that Homer was sensible of the weakness of this story, he introduces it so artfully. He tells us in a short preface, that wine unbends the most serious and wise person, and makes him laugh, dance, and speak, without his usual caution : and then he proceeds to the fable of his ambush before Troy. But no introduction can reconcile it to those who think such comic relations should not at all be introduced into epic poetry.

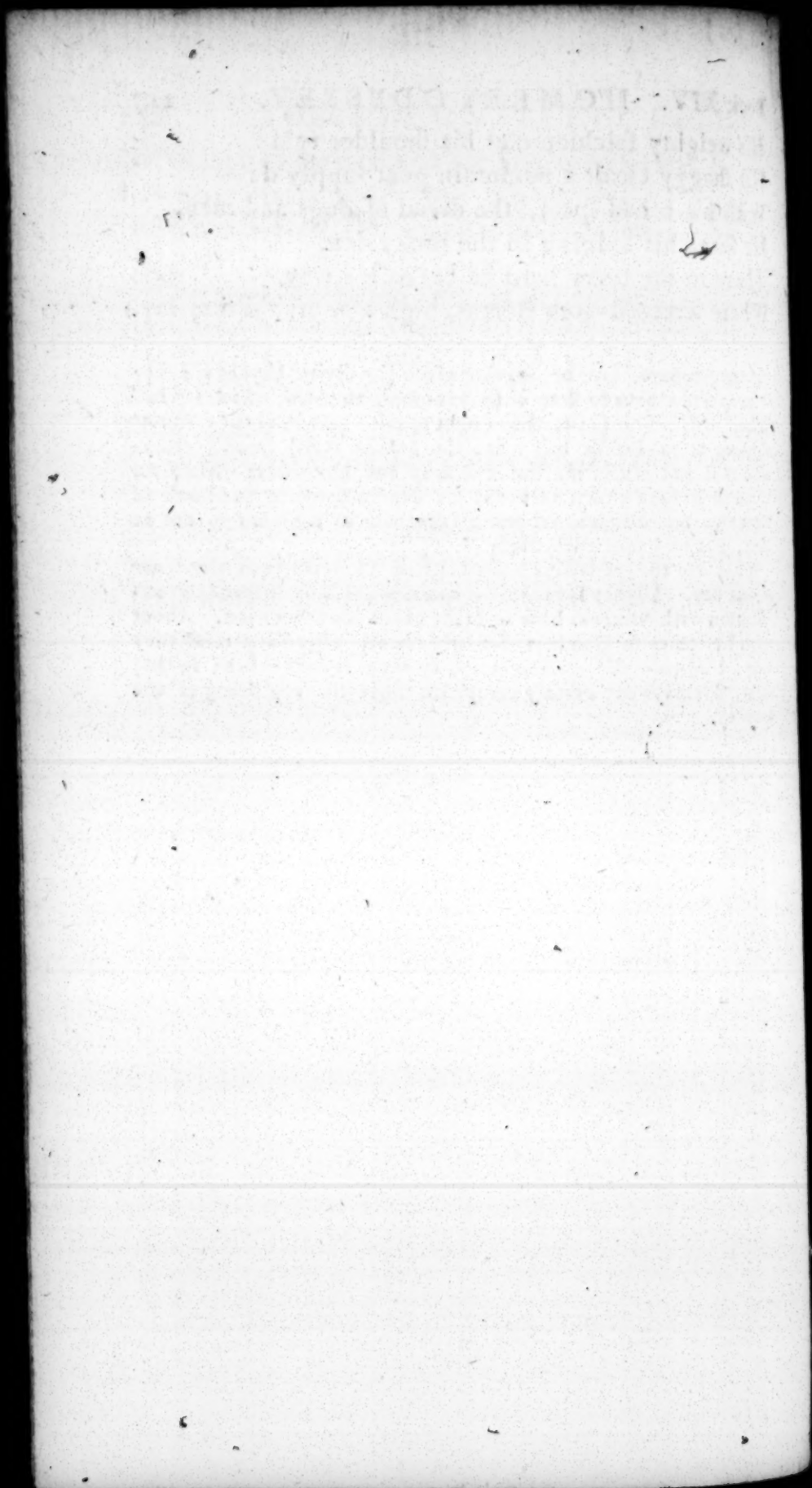
v. 594. *Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care.*] A French critic has been very severe upon this conduct of Eumæus. " The di-

His weighty falchion o'er his shoul'der ty'd :
His shaggy cloak a mountain goat supply'd :
With his broad spear, the dread of dogs and men,
He seeks his lodging in the rocky den.

There to the tusky herd he bends his way, 600
Where screen'd from Boreas, high o'er arch'd they lay.

"vine hogherd, says he, having given the divine Ulysses his supper, sends him to sleep with his hogs, that had white teeth." When critics find fault, they ought to take care that they impute nothing to an author but what the author really speaks, otherwise it is not criticism, but calumny and ignorance. Monsieur Perrault is here guilty of both, for Ulysses sleeps in the house of Eumæus, and Eumæus retires to take care of his charge, not to sleep, but to watch with them.

This and the preceding book take up no more than the space of one day. Ulysses lands in the morning, which is spent in consultation with Minerva how to bring about his restoration. About noon he comes to Eumæus, for immediately after his arrival they dine: they pass the afternoon and evening in conference: so that thirty-five days are exactly completed since the beginning of the Odyssey.



T H E O D Y S S E Y.

* B O O K X V.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The return of Telemachus.

The goddess Minerva commands Telemachus in a vision to return to Ithaca. Pisistratus and he take leave of Menelaus, and arrive at Pylos, where they part; and Telemachus sets sail, after having received on board Theoclymenus the soothsayer. The scene then changes to the cottage of Eumæus, who entertains Ulysses with a recital of his adventures. In the mean time Telemachus arrives on the coast, and sending the vessel to the town, proceeds by himself to the lodge of Eumæus.

NOW had Minerva reach'd those ample plains,
Fam'd for the dance, where Menelaüs reigns;
Anxious she flies to great Ulysses' heir;
His instant voyage challeng'd all her care.

* Neither this book, nor indeed some of the following, are to be reckoned among the most shining parts of the *Odyssey*. They are narrative, and generally low; yet natural, and just enough, considering Homer was resolv'd to describe and follow low life to very minutely. This great poet here resembles an evening sun; he has not the same heat or brightness; there are several little clouds about him, though in some places gilded and adorned: however, to make us amends, he breaks out again before the conclusion of his course, and sets at last in glory.

There is no doubt, but all the parts of a poem are not capable of equal lustre; nay, they ought not to dazzle us alike, or tire us by a perpetual strain upon the imagination. But in these cooler relations a translator has a hard task: he is expected to "shine;" where the author is "not bright:" and the unreasonable critic

Beneath the royal portico display'd,
With Nestor's son, Telemachus was lay'd;

5

demands a copy more noble than the original. It is true, these are the passages of which he ought to take particular care, and to set them off to the best advantage: but however he may polish a vulgar stone, it will still retain its inherent degree of cloudiness; and the man is ignorant indeed, who thinks one can make it a diamond.

The story now turns to Telemachus, and the poet briefly describes his voyage to his country: there is a necessity to be concise, for the hero of an epic poem is never to be out of sight, after his introduction. The little time that Homer employs in the return of Telemachus is not spent unusefully by Ulysses; during this interval, he learns the state of his public and domestic affairs from Eumæus, and prepares the way for the destruction of the suitors, the chief design of the whole *Odyssey*. There is another reason why the poet ought not to dwell at large upon the story of Telemachus; he bears but an incidental relation to the *Odyssey*, and consequently Homer was necessitated to pass over his actions with brevity, that he might describe the hero of his poem at full length. It has been objected, that no mention has been made of any action at all of Telemachus during his whole stay with Menelaus, and that he lies there idly, without making his voyage contribute any thing to the restitution of Ulysses; but from the former observation it is evident, that this silence in the poet proceeds from judgment; nothing is to be inserted in an epic poem but what has some affinity with the main design of it: but what affinity could the actions of Telemachus in the Spartan court have with those of Ulysses? This would have been to make two heroes in one poem, and would have broken the unity of the action; whereas by the contrary conduct Homer unites the two stories, and makes the voyage of Telemachus subservient to the chief action, namely, the restitution of Ulysses. Telemachus undertakes a voyage to make enquiry after Ulysses; this the poet fully describes, because it has an immediate relation to Ulysses; but passes over all other adventures during the absence of Telemachus, because they have no relation to the design.

I know it has been objected, that the whole story of Telemachus is foreign to the *Odyssey*, and that the four first books have not a sufficient connexion with the rest of the poem, and therefore that there is a double action: but this objection will cease, if it be made appear, that this voyage contributes to the restoration of Ulysses; for whatever incident has such an effect, is united to the subject and essential to it. Now that this voyage has such an effect is very evident; the suitors were ready to seize the throne of Ulysses, and compel his wife to marry; but by this voyage Telemachus breaks their whole designs. Instead of usurping the throne, they are obliged to defend themselves: they defer their

In sleep profound the son of Nestor lies ;
Not thine, Ulysses ! Care had seal'd his eyes :

purpose, and waste much time in endeavouring to intercept him in his return. By this method leisure is gained from the violence and addresses of the suitors, till Ulysses returns and brings about his own re-establishment. This voyage therefore is the secret source from which all the happiness of Ulysses flows : for had not Telemachus sailed to Pyle, Penelope must have been compelled to marry, and the throne of Ulysses usurped. I have been more large upon this objection, because many foreign critics lay great weight upon it. See note on v. 110. of the first book.

There has lately been a great dispute amongst the French concerning the length of the stay of Telemachus from his country. The debate is not very material, nor is it very difficult to settle that point. Telemachus sailed from Ithaca in the evening of the second day, and returns to it on the thirty-eighth in the morning, so that he is absent thirty-five days completely.

v. 1. *Now bad Minerva, &c.*] If this had been related by an historian, he would have only said that Telemachus judged it necessary for his affairs to sail back to his own country ; but a poet steps out of the common beaten road, ascribes the wisdom of that hero to the goddess of it, and introduces her in person, to give a dignity to his poetry.

The reader may consult in general the extracts from Bossu, (placed before the *Odyssey*) concerning machines, or the interposition of deities in epic poetry. I will here beg leave to set them in a different and more particular light.

It has been imagined that a deity is never to be introduced but when all human means are ineffectual : if this were true, Minerva would be in vain employed in bringing Telemachus back, when a common messenger might have answered that purpose as well as the goddess. I doubt not but the verse of Horace has led many into this error :

“ Nec deus interfit nisi dignus vindicæ nodus.”

This rule is to be applied only to the theatre, of which Horace there speaks, and means no more, than when the knot of the play is to be untied, and no other way is left for making the discovery, then let a god descend and clear the intricacy to the auditors. But, as Mr. Dryden observes, it has no relation to epic poetry.

It is true, that a deity is never to be introduced upon little and unworthy occasions ; the very design of machines is to add weight and dignity to the story, and consequently an unworthy employment defeats the very intent of them, and debases the deities by making them act in offices unworthy of the characters of divine personages : but then it is as true, that a poet is at liberty to use them for ornament as well as necessity. For instance, both Virgil

Restless he griev'd, with various fears oppress'd,
 And all thy fortunes roll'd within his breast. 10
 When, O Telemachus! (the goddess said)
 Too long in vain, too widely hast thou stray'd.
 Thus leaving careless thy paternal right
 The robbers prize, the prey to lawless might.
 On fond pursuits neglectful while you roam, 15
 Ev'n now, the hand of rapine sacks the dome.
 Hence to Atrides; and his leave implore
 To launch thy vessel for thy natal shore;
 Fly, whilst thy mother virtuous yet withstands
 Her kindred's wishes, and her fire's commands; 20

and Homer in their descriptions of storms introduce deities, Neptune and Æolus, only to fill our minds with grandeur and terror; for in reality a storm might have happened without a miracle, and Æneas and Ulysses both have been driven upon unknown shores, by a common storm as well as by the immediate interposition of Neptune or Æolus. But machines have a very happy effect; the poet seems to converse with gods, gives signs of a divine transport, and distinguishes his poem in all parts from an history.

v. 5. *Beneath the royal portico, &c.*] Minerva here finds Telemachus in bed: it is necessary to remember that Ulysses landed in Ithaca in the morning of the thirty-fifth day; and when Minerva left him, she went to the Spartan court to Telemachus; this vision therefore appears to that hero in the night following the thirty-fifth day. On the thirty-sixth he departs from Menelaus, and lodges that night with Diocles; on the thirty-seventh he embarks towards the evening, sails all night, and lands on the thirty-eighth in the morning in his own country. From this observation it is likewise evident, that Ulysses passes two days in discourse with Eumæus, though the poet only distinguishes the time by the voyage of Telemachus; for the preceding book concludes with the thirty-fifth day, and Telemachus spends the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh and the following night in his return, and meets Ulysses in the morning of the thirty-eighth day. This remark is necessary to avoid confusion, and to make the two stories of Ulysses and Telemachus coincide, in this and the next book of the Odyssey.

v. 20. *Her kindred's wishes, and her fire's commands.*] Ovid had these lines in his view in his epistle of Penelope to Ulysses.

“ Me pater Icarius viduo decedere lecto

“ Cogit, & immensas increpat usque moras.”

Thro' both, Eurymachus pursues the dame,
 And with the noblest gifts asserts his claim.
 Hence therefore, while thy stores thy own remain,
 Thou know'st the practice of the female train,
 Lost in the children of the present spouse, 25
 They slight the pledges of their former vows;
 Their love is always with the lover past;
 Still the succeeding flame expels the last.

But why should Minerva make use of these arguments, to persuade Telemachus to return immediately; and give him no information concerning the safety of Ulysses, who was now actually landed in his own country? The poet reserves this discovery to be made in the future part of the story: if Telemachus had known of his father's being already returned, there could have been no room for the beautiful interview between the father and the son; for the doubts and fears, the surprise and filial tenderness, on the part of Telemachus; and for the paternal fondness, the yearnings of nature, and the transports of joy, on the part of Ulysses. Aristotle particularly commends this conduct of Homer with respect to Ulysses. These disguises and concealments, (says that author) perplex the fable with agreeable plots and intricacies, surprise us with a variety of incidents, and give room for the relation of many adventures; while Ulysses still appears in assumed characters, and upon every occasion recites a new history. At the same time the poet excellently sustains his character, which is every where distinguished by a wise and ready dissimulation.

v. 24. *Thou know'st the practice of the female train.*] This is not spoken in derogation of Penelope, nor applied to her in particular; it is laid down as an universal maxim, and uttered by the goddess of wisdom: but (says Madam Dacier) I wish the poet had told us, if the husbands in his days had better memories toward their departed wives. But what advantage would this be to the fair sex, if we allow that an husband may possibly forget a former wife? I chuse rather to congratulate the modern ladies, against whom there is not the least objection of this nature. Is it not evident, that all our widows are utterly disconsolate, appear many months in deep mourning? and whenever they are prevailed upon to a second marriage, do they not chuse out the strongest, best built, and most vigorous youth of the nation? For what other reason but that such constitutions may be a security against their ever feeling the like calamity again? What I have here said shews that the world is well changed since the times of Homer; and however the race of man is dwindled and decayed since those ages, yet it is a demonstration that the modern ladies are not to blame for it,

Let o'er thy house some chosen maid preside,
 'Till heav'n decrees to bless thee in a bride. 30
 But now thy more attentive ears incline,
 Observe the warnings of a pow'r divine:
 For thee their snares the suitor lords shall lay
 In Samos' sands, or straits of Ithaca,
 To seize thy life shall lurk the murd'rous band, 35
 Ere yet thy footsteps press thy native land.
 No ——— sooner far their riot and their lust
 All cov'ring earth shall bury deep in dust!
 Then distant from the scatter'd islands steer,
 Nor let the night retard thy full career; 40
 Thy heav'nly guardian shall instruct the gales
 To smoothe thy passage, and supply thy sails:
 And when at Ithaca thy labour ends,
 Send to the town the vessel with thy friends;
 But seek thou first the master of the swine, 45
 (For still to thee his loyal thoughts incline)
 There pass the night: while he his course pursues
 To bring Penelope the wish'd-for news,
 That thou safe sailing from the Pylian strand
 Art come to bless her in thy native land. 50
 Thus spoke the goddess, and resum'd her flight
 To the pure regions of eternal light.
 Meanwhile Pisistratus he gently shakes,
 And with these words the slumb'ring youth awakes.
 Rise, son of Nestor! for the road prepare, 55
 And join the harness'd coursers to the car.
 What cause, he cry'd, can justify our flight,
 To tempt the dangers of forbidding night?
 Here wait we rather, 'till approaching day
 Shall prompt our speed, and point the ready way. 60
 Nor think of flight before the Spartan king
 Shall bid farewell, and bounteous presents bring;
 Gifts, which to distant ages safely stor'd,
 The sacred act of friendship shall record.

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Thus he. But when the dawn bestreak'd the east,
The king from Helen rose, and fought his guest. 66
As soon as his approach the hero knew,
The splendid mantle round him first he threw,
Then o'er his ample shoulders whirl'd the cloak,
Respectful met the monarch, and bespoke. 70

Hail, great Atrides, favour'd of high Jove!
Let not thy friends in vain for licence move.
Swift let us measure back the wat'ry way,
Nor check our speed, impatient of delay.

If with desire so strong thy bosom glows, 75
Ill, said the king, shou'd I thy wish oppose;
For oft' in others freely I reprove
The ill-tim'd efforts of officious love;
Who love too much, hate in the like extreme,
And both the golden mean alike condemn. 80
Alike he thwarts the hospitable end,
Who drives the free, or stays the hasty friend;
True friendship's laws are by this rule express,
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
Yet stay, my friends, and in your chariot take 85
The noblest presents that our love can make:
Meantime commit we to our women's care
Some choice domestic viands to prepare;
The trav'ler rising from the banquet gay,
Eludes the labours of the tedious way. 90

v. 84. *Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.*] Homer has here laid together admirable precepts for social life; the passage was much admired; Herodotus borrowed it, as we are informed by Eustathius,

——— τραπέζῃ
Μειλίζαντ' ἀπόπεμψαι ἑπὰν ἐθέλωσι νέεσθαι.

But perhaps Eustathius quoted by memory, or through inadvertency wrote down Herodotus for Theocritus, in whom these lines are to be found:

Μηδὲ ξεινοδόκον κακὸν ἔμμεναι, ἀλλὰ τραπέζῃ
Μειλίζαντ' ἀπόπεμψαι, ἑπὰν ἐθέλωσι νέεσθαι,

Then if a wider course shall rather please
Thro' spacious Argos, and the realms of Greece,
Atrides in his chariot shall attend;

Himself thy convoy to each royal friend.

No prince will let Ulysses' heir remove

95

Without some pledge, some monument of love:

These will the caldron, these the tripod give,

From those the well-pair'd mules we shall receive,

Or bowl emboss'd whose golden figures live.

To whom the youth, for prudence fam'd reply'd,
O monarch, care of heav'n! thy people's pride! 101
No friend in Ithaca my place supplies,

No pow'rful hands are there, no watchful eyes:

My stores expos'd and fenceless house demand

The speediest succour from my guardian hand; 105

Lest in a search too anxious and too vain

Of one lost joy, I lose what yet remain.

His purpose when the gen'rous warrior heard,
He charg'd the household cates to be prepar'd.

v. 109. *He charg'd the household cates to be prepar'd.*] It is in the original, "He commanded Helen and her maids" to do it. The moderns have blamed Menelaus for want of delicacy in commanding his queen to perform such household offices. I read such passages with pleasure, because they are exact pictures of antient life: we may as well condemn the first inhabitants of the world for want of politeness, in living in tents and bowers, and not in palaces. This command of Menelaus agrees with those manners, and with the patriarchal life. Gen. xviii. 6. "Abraham hastened into his tent, and said unto Sarah his wife, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal: knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth."

I doubt not but the continual descriptions of entertainments have likewise given offence to many; but we may be in some degree reconciled to them, if we consider they are not only instances of the hospitality of the antients, but of their piety and religion: every meal was a religious act, a sacrifice, or a feast of thanksgiving: libations of wine, and offerings of part of the flesh, were constantly made at every entertainment. This gives a dignity to the description, and when we read it, we are not to consider it as an act merely of eating or drinking, but as an office of worship to the gods.

Now with the dawn, from his adjoining home, 110
Was Boethœdes Eteonus come ;

Swift as the word he forms the rising blaze,
And o'er the coals the smoking fragments lays.
Meantime the king, his son, and Helen, went
Where the rich wardrobe breath'd a costly scent. 115

The king selected from the glitt'ring rows
A bowl ; the prince a silver beaker chose.
Theauteous queen revolv'd with careful eyes
Her various textures of unnumber'd dyes,
And chose the largest ; with no vulgar art 120

Her own fair hands embroider'd ev'ry part :
Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,
Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.
Then with each gift they hasten'd to their guest,
And thus the king Ulysses' heir address. 125

Since fix'd are thy resolves, may thund'ring Jove
With happiest omens thy desires approve !
This silver bowl, whose costly margins shine
Enchas'd with gold, this valu'd gift be thine ;

This is a note of the critics ; but perhaps the same thing might as well be said of our modern entertainments, wherever the good practice of saying grace before and after meat is not yet laid aside.

v. 123. *Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.*] If this passage were translated literally, it would stand thus, "Helen chose a vesture of most beautiful embroidery, and of the largest extent, "a vesture that lay beneath the rest." We are to understand by the last circumstance, that this vesture was the choicest of her wardrobe, it being repositied with the greatest care, or *λείατος ἄλλων*. The verses are taken from lib. vi. of the Iliad. This robe was the work of Helen's own hands ; an instance that in those days a great lady, or a great beauty, might be a good workwoman : and she here seems to take particular care to obviate an opinion one might otherwise have, that she did not apply herself to those works till her best days were past. We are told in the Iliad,

Her in the palace, at her loom she found,
The golden web her own sad story crown'd :
The Trojan wars she weav'd, herself the prize,
And the dire triumphs of her fatal eyes.

To me this present, of Vulcanian frame, 130
 From Sidon's hospitable monarch came ;
 To thee we now consign the precious load,
 The pride of kings, and labour of a god.

Then gave the cup ; while Megapenthe brought
 The silver vase with living sculpture wrought. 135
 The beauteous queen advancing next, display'd
 The shining veil, and thus endearing said.

Accept, dear youth, this monument of love,
 Long since, in better days, by Helen wove :
 Safe in thy mother's care the vesture lay, 140
 To deck thy bride and grace thy nuptial day.
 Meantime may'st thou with happiest speed regain
 Thy stately palace, and thy wide domain.

She said, and gave the veil ; with grateful look
 The prince the variegated present took. 145
 And now, when thro' the royal dome they pass'd,
 High on a throne the king each stranger plac'd.
 A golden ew'r th' attendant damsel brings,
 Replete with water from the crystal springs ;
 With copious streams the shining vase supplies 150
 A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 The glitt'ring canisters are crown'd with bread ;
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste
 Of choicest sort and savour ; rich repast ; 155
 Whilst Eteoneus portions out the shares,
 Atrides' son the purple draught prepares.
 And now (each sated with the genial feast,
 And the short rage of thirst and hunger ceas'd).
 Ulysses' son, with his illustrious friend, 160
 The horses join, the polish'd car ascend.
 Along the court the fiery steeds rebound,
 And the wide portal echoes to the sound.
 The king precedes ; a bowl with fragrant wine
 (Libation destin'd to the pow'rs divine) 165

His right-hand held : before the steeds he stands,
Then, mix'd with pray'rs, he utters these commands.

Farewel and prosper, youths ! let Nestor know
What grateful thoughts still in this bosom glow,
For all the proofs of his paternal care, 170
Thro' the long dangers of the ten years war.
Ah ! doubt not our report (the prince rejoin'd)
Of all the virtues of thy generous mind.

And oh ! return'd might we Ulysses meet !
To him thy presents shew, thy words repeat : 175
How will each speech his grateful wonder raise ?
How will each gift indulge us in thy praise ?

Scarce ended thus the prince, when on the right
Advanc'd the bird of Jove : auspicious sight !
A milk-white fowl his clinching talons bore, 180
With care domestic pamper'd at the floor.
Peasants in vain with threat'ning cries pursue,
In solemn speed the bird majestic flew
Full dexter to the car : the prosperous sight
Fill'd ev'ry breast with wonder and delight. 185

But Nestor's son the chearful silence broke,
And in these words the Spartan chief bespoke.

v. 174. *And oh ! return'd might we Ulysses meet ! &c.* It is not impossible but a false reading may have crept into the text in this verse. In the present edition it stands thus :

————— αἱ γὰρ ἐγὼν οἷς
Νοστήσας, Ἰθάκην δὲ κίων, Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
εἶποιμ'. ———

The sense will be less intricate, and the construction more easy, if instead of *κίων* we insert *κίχων*, and read the line thus pointed.

Νοστήσας Ἰθάκην δὲ, κίχων Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
εἶποιμ'.

Then the verse will have this import, “ O may I, upon my return to Ithaca, finding Ulysses in his palace, give him an account of their friendship !” whereas in the common editions there is a tautology, and either *κίων* or *νοστήσας* must be allowed to be a superfluity.

Say if to us the gods these omens send,
Or fates peculiar to thyself portend ?

Whilst yet the monarch paus'd, with doubts oppress'd,
The beauteous queen reliev'd his lab'ring breast. 191

Hear me, she cry'd, to whom the gods have giv'n
To read this sign, and mystic sense of heav'n.

As thus the plummy sov'reign of the air

Left on the mountain's brow his callow care, 195

And wander'd thro' the wide æthereal way

To pour his wrath on yon' luxurious prey ;

v. 192. *Hear me, she cry'd, &c.*] It is not clear why the poet ascribes a greater quickness and penetration to Helen in the solution of this prodigy, than to Menelaus. Is it, as Eustathius asserts, from a superiour acuteness of nature and presence of mind in the fair sex ? Or is it, that Helen in this resembles some modern beauties, who (though their husbands be asked the question) will make the answer themselves ? I would willingly believe that Helen might happen to stand in such a position, as to be able to make more minute observation upon the flight of the eagle, than Menelaus ; and being more circumstantial in the observation, she might for that reason be more ready and circumstantial in the interpretation. But Homer himself tells us, that she received it from the gods. This is a pious lesson, to teach us in general, that all knowledge is the gift of God, and perhaps here particularly inserted to raise the character of Helen, and make us less surpris'd to see her forgiven by Menelaus, when she is not only pardoned, but favoured thus with inspiration. And indeed it was necessary to reconcile us to this fatal beauty ; at whom the reader is naturally enough offended : she is an actress in many of the scenes of the *Odyssey*, and consequently to be redeemed from contempt : this is done by degrees ; the poet steals away the adulteress from our view, to set before us the amiable penitent.

v. 194. *As thus the plummy sov'reign, &c.*] Ulysses is the eagle, the bird represents the suitors : the cries of the men and women when the eagle seized his prey, denote the lamentations of the relations of the suitors, who are slain by Ulysses. The circumstance of the flight of the eagle close to the horses, is added to shew that the prodigy had a fixed and certain reference to a person present ; namely Telemachus : the eagle comes suddenly from a mountain ; this means that Ulysses shall unexpectedly arrive from the country to the suitors destruction. The fowl is said to be fed by the family, this is a full designation of the suitors, who feed upon Ulysses, and prey upon his family. And as this bird is killed by the talons of the eagle, so the suitors fall by the spear of Ulysses. Eustathius.

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So shall thy god-like father, tofs'd in vain
Thro' all the dangers of the boundless main,
Arrive, (or is perchance already come) 200
From slaughter'd gluttons to release the dome.

Oh! if this promis'd blifs by thund'ring Jove,
(The prince reply'd) stand fix'd in fate above;
To thee, as to some god, I'll temples raise,
And crown thy altars with the costly blaze. 205

He said; and bending o'er his chariot, flung
Athwart the fiery steeds the smarting thong;
The bounding shafts upon the harness play,
'Till night descending intercepts the way.
To Diocleus, at Pheræ, they repair, 210
Whose boasted sire was sacred Alpheus' heir;
With him all night the youthful strangers stay'd,
Nor found the hospitable rites unpay'd.
But soon as morning from her orient bed
Had ting'd the mountains with her earliest red, 215
They join'd the steeds, and on the chariot sprung;
The brazen portals in their passage rung.

To Pylos soon they came; when thus begun
To Nestor's heir Ulysses' god-like son:
Let not Pisistratus in vain be prest, 220
Nor unconsenting hear his friend's request;
His friend by long hereditary claim,
In toils his equal, and in years the same.
No farther from our vessel, I implore,
The coursers drive; but lash them to the shore. 225
Too long thy father would his friend detain;
I dread his proffer'd kindness, urg'd in vain.

v. 226. *Too long thy father would his friend detain.*] This has been objected against, as contrary to the promise of Telemachus, who assured Menelaus that he would "acquaint Nestor with his great friendship and hospitality:" is he therefore not guilty of falsehood, by embarking immediately without fulfilling his promise? Eustathius answers, that the prodigy of the eagle occasions this alteration, and that the not fulfilling his promise is to be ascribed to

The hero paus'd, and ponder'd this request,
 While love and duty warr'd within his breast.
 At length resolv'd, he turn'd his ready hand, 230
 And lash'd his panting coursers to the strand.
 There, while within the poop with care he stor'd
 The regal presents of the Spartan lord;
 With speed be gone, (said he) call ev'ry mate,
 Ere yet to Nestor I the tale relate: 235
 'Tis true, the fervour of his gen'rous heart
 Brooks no repulse, nor could'st thou soon depart;
 Himself will seek thee here, nor wilt thou find,
 In words alone, the Pylian monarch kind.
 But when arriv'd he thy return shall know, 240
 How will his breast with honest fury glow?
 This said, the sounding strokes his horses fire,
 And soon he reach'd the palace of his fire.

Now, (cry'd Telemachus) with speedy care
 Hoise ev'ry sail, and ev'ry oar prepare. 245
 Swift as the word his willing mates obey,
 And seize their seats, impatient for the sea.

Meantime the prince with sacrifice adores
 Minerva, and her guardian aid implores;
 When lo! a wretch ran breathless to the shore, 250
 New from his crime, and reeking yet with gore.

accident and necessity. But the words of Telemachus sufficiently justify his veracity; they are of the plural number *καταλέξομεν*, "I and Pisistratus will inform Nestor of your hospitality:" this promise he leaves to be performed by Pisistratus, who returns directly to Nestor. Others blame Telemachus as unpolite, in leaving Nestor without any acknowledgment for his civilities. Dacier has recourse to the command of Minerva, and to the prodigy of the eagle, for his vindication: he is commanded by the gods to return immediately; and therefore not blameable for complying with their injunctions. But perhaps it is a better reason to say, that the nature of the poem requires such a conduct; the action of the *Odyssey* stands still till the return of Telemachus, (whatever happens to him in Pyle being foreign to it) and therefore Homer shews his judgment, in precipitating the actions of Telemachus, rather than trifling away the time, while the story sleeps, only to shew a piece of complaisance and ceremony.

A seer he was, from great Melampus sprung,
 Melampus, who in Pylos flourish'd long,
 'Till urg'd by wrongs a foreign realm he chose,
 Far from the hateful cause of all his woes. 255
 Neleus his treasures one long year detains;
 As long, he groan'd in Phylacus's chains:
 Meantime, what anguish and what rage, combin'd,
 For lovely Pero rack'd his lab'ring mind!
 Yet 'scap'd he death; and vengeful of his wrong 260
 To Pylos drove the lowing herds along:
 Then (Neleus vanquish'd, and consign'd the fair
 To Bias' arms) he fought a foreign air;
 Argos the rich for his retreat he chose,
 There form'd his empire; there his palace rose. 265
 From him Antiphates and Mantius came:
 The first begot Oiclus great in fame,
 And he Amphiaraus, immortal name!
 The people's saviour, and divinely wise,
 Belov'd by Jove, and him who gilds the skies, 270
 Yet short his date of life! by female pride he dies. }

v. 252. ——— *From great Melampus sprung.*] There is some obscurity in this genealogical history. Melampus was a prophet, he lived in Pylos, and was a person of great wealth; his uncle Neleus seized his riches, and detained them a whole year, to oblige him to recover his herds detained by Iphyclus in Phylace; he failed in the attempt, and was kept in prison by Iphyclus, the son of Phylacus. Bias, the brother of Melampus, was in love with Pero the daughter of Neleus; Neleus, to engage Melampus more strongly in the enterprise, promises to give Pero in marriage to his brother Bias, upon the recovery of his herds from Iphyclus. At length Iphyclus releases Melampus from prison, upon his discovering to him how he might have an heir to succeed to his dominions, and rewards him with restoring the herds of Neleus: then Neleus retracts his promise, and refuses to give his daughter Pero to Bias the brother of Melampus; upon this Neleus and Melampus quarrel, and engaging in a single combat, Neleus is vanquished, and Melampus retires to Argos. See lib. xi. v. 350, &c. and the note.

v. 270. *Belov'd by Jove, and him who gilds the skies,
 Yet short his date of life! by female pride he dies.*]

The poet means Eryphyle, who, being bribed with a golden brace-

From Mantius Clitus, whom Aurora's love
 Snatch'd for his beauty to the thrones above:
 And Polyphides on whom Phœbus shone
 With fullest rays, Amphiaraus now gone; 275
 In Hyperefia's groves he made abode,
 And taught mankind the counsels of the god.

let by Polynices, persuaded her husband Amphiaraus to go to the Theban war, where he lost his life. This is a remarkable passage: "Though he was loved by Jupiter and Apollo, yet he reached not to old age." Is a short life the greatest instance of the love of the gods? Plato quotes the verse to this purpose. "The life of man is so loaded with calamity, that it is an instance of the favour of heaven to take the burthen from us with speed." The same author in Axiochus* (if that dialogue be his) asserts, that the gods, having a perfect insight into human affairs, take speedily to themselves those whom they love. Thus when Trophonius and Agamedes, had built a temple to Apollo, they prayed to receive a blessing the most beneficial to mankind: the god granted their prayers, and they were both found dead the next morning. Thus likewise the priestesses of Juno, when her two sons had yoked themselves to her chariot, and drawn her for the greater expedition to the temple, prayed to the goddess to reward their filial piety; and they both died that night. This agrees with the expression of Menander, He whom the gods love dies young.

*Ον οἱ θεοὶ φιλεῖσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος.

v. 272. ——— Aurora's love

Snatch'd for his beauty to the thrones above.]

There is nothing more common than such accounts of men being carried away by goddesses, in all the Greek poets; and yet what offends more against credibility? The poets invented these fables merely out of compliment to the dead. When any person happened to be drowned in a river; if a man, some water-nymph stole him; if a woman, she was seized to be the wife of the river god. If any were lost at sea, Neptune or some of the sea gods or goddesses had taken them to their beds. But to speak to the present purpose; if any person died in the fields, and his body happened not to be found, if he was murdered and buried, or devoured by wild beasts, so that no account was heard of his death, he was immediately imagined to be taken from the earth by some deity who was in love with his beauty. Thus Clitus being lost in his morning sports, like Orion while he was hunting, he was fabled to be carried to heaven by Aurora; being lost at the time of the morning, over which that deity presides.

From him sprung Theoclymenus, who found
(The sacred wine yet foaming on the ground)

Telemachus : whom, as to heav'n he prest 280
His ardent vows, the stranger thus address.

O thou ! that dost thy happy course prepare
With pure libations, and with solemn pray'r ;
By that dread pow'r to whom thy vows are paid ;
By all the lives of these ; thy own dear head, 285
Declare sincerely to no foe's demand
Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land.

v. 278. *From him sprung Theoclymenus* —] We have had a long genealogical digression to introduce Theoclymenus : I fear the whole passage will prove distasteful to an English palate, it not being capable of any ornaments of poetry. I could wish Homer had omitted or shortened such passages, though they might be useful in his age ; for by such honourable insertions he made his court to the best families then in Greece. It is true the story is told concisely, and this occasions some obscurity ; distance of time as well as place, makes us see all objects somewhat confusedly and indistinctly. In the days of Homer these stories were universally known, and consequently wanted no explication ; the obscurity therefore is not to be charged upon Homer, but to time, which has defaced and worn away some parts of the impression, and made the image less discernible.

The use the poet makes of the adventure of Theoclymenus, is to give encouragement to Telemachus : he assists him with his advice, and by his gift of prophecy explains to him a prodigy in the conclusion of this book. By this method he connects it with the main action, in giving Telemachus assurances that his affairs hasten to a re-establishment. Besides, these short relations are valuable, as they convey to posterity brief histories of antient facts and families that are extant no where else.

v. 287. *Declare—thy name, and lineage, &c.*] These questions may be thought somewhat extraordinary ; for what apparent reason is there for this fugitive to be told the name of the parents of Telemachus ? But the interrogations are very material ; he makes them to learn if Telemachus or his father are friends to the person slain by his hand ? if they were, instead of sailing with him, he would have reason to fly from him, as from a person who might take away his life by the laws of the country. Thus in the Hebrew law, Numb. xxxv. 19. "The revenger of blood, (*וְהַדָּם* or propinquus) shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him." But the Jews had cities of refuge, to which the murderers fled as to a sanctuary : the Greeks in like manner, if the homicide fled into a voluntary exile, permitted him to be in security till

Prepare then, said Telemachus, to know
 A tale from falsehood free, not free from woe.
 From Ithaca, of royal birth I came, 290
 And great Ulysses (ever honour'd name !)
 Was once my sire : tho' now for ever lost
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
 Whose fate enquiring, thro' the world we rove ;
 The last, the wretched proof of filial love. 295

The stranger then. Nor shall I aught conceal,
 But the dire secret of my fate reveal.
 Of my own tribe an Argive wretch I slew ;
 Whose pow'rful friends the luckless deed pursue
 With unrelenting rage, and force from home 300
 The blood-stain'd exile, ever doom'd to roam.
 But bear, oh bear me o'er yon' azure flood ;
 Receive the suppliant ! spare my destin'd blood !

Stranger (reply'd the prince) securely rest
 Affianc'd in our faith ; henceforth our guest. 305
 Thus affable, Ulysses' god-like heir
 Takes from the stranger's hand the glitt'ring spear :
 He climbs the ship, ascends the stern with haste,
 And by his side the guest accepted plac'd.
 The chief his orders gives : th' obedient band 310
 With due observance wait the chief's command :

the murder was atoned, either by fulfilling a certain time of banishment, or by a pecuniary mulct or expiation.

I will only further remark the conciseness of these interrogations of Theoclymenus ; he asks four questions in a breath, in the compass of one line ; his apprehensions of being pursued give him no leisure to expatiate. Homer judiciously adapts his poetry to the circumstances of the murderer, a man in fear being in great haste to be in security. Telemachus answers with equal brevity, being under a necessity to finish his voyage in the night to avoid the ambush of the suitors. For this reason Homer shortens the relation, and complies with the exigency of Telemachus : with this further view ; to unite the subordinate story of Telemachus with that of Ulysses, it being necessary to hasten to the chief action, and without delay carry on the main design of the Odyssey in the re-establishment of Ulysses.

With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.

Minerva calls ; the ready gales obey

With rapid speed to whirl them o'er the sea.

315

Crurus they pass'd, next Chalcis roll'd away,

When thick'ning darkness clos'd the doubtful day ;

v. 316. *Crurus they pass'd, next Chalcis*—&c.] This whole passage has been greatly corrupted ; one line is omitted in all our editions of Homer, and the verses themselves are printed erroneously : for thus they stand, lib. viii. p. 539. of Strabo's Geography.

Ἐὰν δὲ παρὰ Κρήνης, καὶ Χαλκίδα καλλιρέεθρον,
Δύσσετό τ' ἥελι σκυῖωντο τε πᾶσαι ἀγυαί,
Ἦ δὲ Φεᾶς ἐπέβαλλεν ἀγαλλομένη διδὸς ὥροι.

The first line is added from Strabo : thus in Latin,

“ Præterierunt Crunos, & Chalcida fluentis amœnam.”

He writes ἀγαλλομένη for ἐπειγομένη : and Φεᾶς instead of Φεράς. The course that Telemachus steered is thus explained by the same author : he first sailed northwardly as far as Elis, then he turned towards the east, avoiding the direct course to Ithaca, to escape the ambush of the suitors, who lay between Samos and Ithaca. Then he passed the Echinades (called Θοαί, that is ὀξεῖαι, or “ sharp-pointed,” by Homer. See Strabo, lib. x. They are called Oxias by Pliny) lying near the gulf of Corinth, and the mouths of Achelous ; thus leaving Ithaca on the east, and passing it, he alters his course again, sails northwardly between Ithaca and Acarnania, and lands on the coast opposite to the Cephallenian ocean, where the suitors formed their ambush. The places mentioned by Homer lie in this order, Cruni, Chalcis, and Phæa : and are all rivers of small note, or rather brooks, as Strabo expresses it : ἀδύξων ποταμῶν ὀνόματα, μᾶλλον δὲ Ὀχέτων.

It is highly probable that Phæa, and not Pheræ, is the true reading, for Pheræ lay in Messenia, and not in Elis, as Strabo writes, and was in possession of Agamemnon ; for he mentions that city amongst the seven which he promises Achilles, in the ninth book of the Iliad.

Sev'n ample cities shall confess thy sway,

Thee Enope, and Pheræ thee obey.

If it had not been under his dominion, how could he transfer the right to Achilles ? Besides, it would be absurd to join Pheræ directly with Chalcis, when the one was in Messenia, the other in Elis ; this would make the course of Telemachus's navigation unintelligible, if Elis and Messenia were confounded in the relation, and used promiscuously without order or regularity.

The silver Phæa's glitt'ring rills they lost,
 And skimm'd along by Elis' sacred coast.
 Then cautious thro' the rocky reaches wind, 320
 And turning sudden, shun the death design'd.

Meantime the king, Eumæus, and the rest,
 Sat in the cottage, at their rural feast :
 The banquet past, and satiate ev'ry man,
 To try his host Ulysses thus began. 325

Yet one night more, my friends, indulge your guest ;
 The last I purpose in your walls to rest :

To-morrow for myself I must provide,
 And only ask your counsel, and a guide :
 Patient to roam the street, by hunger led, 330
 And bless the friendly hand that gives me bread.

There in Ulysses' roof I may relate
 Ulysses' wand'rings to his royal mate ;
 Or mingling with the suitors haughty train,
 Not undeserving, some support obtain. 335

Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
 Patron of industry and manual arts :

I will only add that Strabo in the xxth book of his Geography, instead of *Καλλιγέεθρον*, reads *πειρηέσσαν*, perhaps through a slip of his memory,

v. 336. *Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
 Patron of industry and manual arts.]*

Mercury was the servant and minister of the gods, and was feigned to be the patron of all persons of the like station upon earth ; it was supposed to be by his favour that all servants and attendants were successful in their several functions. In this view the connexion will be easy. “ I will go (says Ulysses) and offer my service to the suitors, and by the favour of Mercury who gives success to persons of my condition, shall prosper ; for no man is better able to execute the offices of attendance, than myself.” It may be objected, that these functions are unworthy of the character, and beneath the dignity of an hero ; but Ulysses is obliged to act in his assumed, not real character ; as a beggar, not as a king. Athenæus (lib. i. p. 18.) vindicates Ulysses in another manner. “ Men (says he) in former ages performed their own offices, and gloried in their dexterity in such employments, Thus Ho-

Few can with me in dext'rous works contend;
 The pyre to build, the stubborn oak to rend;
 To turn the tasteful viand o'er the flame;
 Or foam the goblet with a purple stream. 340
 Such are the tasks of men of mean estate,
 Whom fortune dooms to serve the rich and great.

Alas! (Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd)

How sprung a thought so monstrous in thy mind? 345
 If on that god-less race thou wouldst attend,
 Fate owes thee sure a miserable end!

Their wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky,
 And pull descending vengeance from on high.
 Not such, my friend, the servants of their feast; 350
 A blooming train in rich embroid'ry drest,
 With earth's whole tribute the bright table bends,
 And smiling round celestial youth attends.

Stay then: no eye askance beholds thee here;
 Sweet is thy converse to each social ear; 355
 Well pleas'd, and pleasing, in our cottage rest,
 'Till good Telemachus accepts his guest
 With genial gifts, and change of fair attires,
 And safe conveys thee where thy soul desires.

To him the man of woes. O gracious Jove! 360
 Reward this stranger's hospitable love,

"mer describes Ulysses as the most dextrous man living, in ordering wood for the fire, and in the arts of cookery." But it is no more derogation to him to put on the appearance of a beggar, than it was to Pallas to assume that of a swain, as she frequently does throughout the *Odyssey*.

v. 348. *Their wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky.*] The sense of this passage appears to me very obvious; Dacier renders it, "whose violence and insolence is so great that they regard not the gods, and that they attack even the heavens." I should rather chuse to understand the words in the more plain and easy construction: Grotius is of this judgment, and thinks they bear the same import as these in *Gen. xviii. 21.* "I will go down and see if they have done according to the cry which is come unto heaven; and indeed there is a great similitude between the expressions.

Who knows the son of sorrow to relieve,
Cheers the sad heart, nor lets affliction grieve.

Of all the ills unhappy mortals know,
A life of wand'rings is the greatest woe : 365

On all their weary ways wait care and pain,
And pine and penury, a meagre train.

To such a man since harbour you afford,
Relate the farther fortunes of your lord ;
What cares his mother's tender breast engage, 370
And fire, forsaken on the verge of age ;
Beneath the sun prolong they yet their breath,
Or range the house of darkness and of death ?

To whom the swain. Attend what you enquire,
Laertes lives, the miserable fire, 375
Lives, but implores of ev'ry pow'r to lay
The burden down, and wishes for the day.
Torn from his offspring in the eve of life,
Torn from th' embraces of his tender wife,

v. 370. *What cares his mother's tender breast engage,
And fire, forsaken on the verge of age.*]

These questions may seem to be needless, because Ulysses had been fully acquainted with the story of Laertes, and the death of his mother Anticlea, by the shade of Tiresias : but Ulysses personates a stranger, and to carry on that character, pretends to be unacquainted with all the affairs of his own family. I cannot affirm that such frequent repetitions of the same circumstances are beautiful in Homer ; the retirement of Laertes has been frequently mentioned, and the death of Anticlea related in other parts of the *Odyssey* ; however necessary such reiterated accounts may be, I much question whether they will prove entertaining ; Homer himself in this place seems to apprehend it, for Eumæus passes over the questions made by Ulysses with a very short answer, and enlarges upon other circumstances, relating to his family and affairs, to give (as Eustathius observes) variety to his poetry. But this conduct is very judicious upon another account : it lets Ulysses into the knowledge of his condition, and by it he is able to take his measures with the greater certainty, in order to bring about his own re-establishment. This is a demonstration that the objection of Rapin is without foundation ; he calls these interviews between Ulysses and Eumæus mere idle fables, invented solely for amusement, and contributing nothing to the action of the *Odyssey* ; but the contrary is true, for Ulysses directs his course according to these informations.

Book XV. HOMER's ODYSSEY.

271

Sole, and all comfortless, he wastes away
Old age, untimely posting ere his day. 380

She too, sad mother ! for Ulysses lost
Pin'd out her bloom, and vanish'd to a ghost,
(So dire a fate, ye righteous gods ! avert,
From ev'ry friendly, ev'ry feeling heart !)

385

While yet she was, tho' clouded o'er with grief,
Her pleasing converse minister'd relief :

With Ctimene, her youngest daughter, bred,
One roof contain'd us, and one table fed.

But when the softly-stealing pace of time
Crept on from childhood into youthful prime, 390

To Samos' isle she sent the wedded fair ;

Me to the fields, to tend the rural care ;

Array'd in garments her own hands had wove,
Nor less the darling object of her love. 395

Her hapless death my brighter days o'ercast,
Yet providence deserts me not at last ;

My present labours food and drink procure,

And more, the pleasure to relieve the poor.

Small is the comfort from the queen to hear 400
Unwelcome news, or vex the royal ear ;

v. 399. *And more, the pleasure to relieve the poor.*] This verse,

Τῶν ἐφαγόντ', ἐπιόντῃ, καὶ αἰδοίοισιν ἔδωκα.

has been traduced into the utmost obscenity ; Eustathius vindicates the expression : it means, " I have sustained myself with meat and " drink by an honest industry, and have got wherewithal to re- " lieve virtue that wants." He interprets αἰδοίοισιν, by ἀνδράσιν αἰδῶς ἀξίοις, or, " men worthy of regard and honour : " ξήνοις καὶ καίταις. The following words,

οὐ μέλιχόν ἐστιν ἀκῦσαι
οὐτ' ἐπ' ὅ, ὅτε τι ἔργον

are capable of a double construction, and imply either that " I " take no delight in hearing of Penelope, she being in distress, " and in the power of the suitors ;" or that the suitors so besiege the palace, that " it is impossible for me to hear one gentle word " from Penelope, or receive one obliging action from her hand." The preference is submitted to the reader's judgment ; they both contain images of tenderness and humanity.

Blank and discountenanc'd the servants stand,
 Nor dare to question where the proud command :
 No profit springs beneath usurping pow'rs ;
 Want feeds not there, where luxury devours, 405
 Nor harbours charity where riot reigns :
 Proud are the lords, and wretched are the swains.

'The suff'ring chief at this began to melt ;
 And, oh Eumæus ! thou (he cries) hast felt
 The spite of fortune too ! her cruel hand 410
 Snatch'd thee an infant from thy native land !
 Snatch'd from thy parents arms, thy parents eyes,
 'To early wants ! a man of miseries !
 Thy whole sad story, from its first, declare :
 Sunk the fair city by the rage of war, 415
 Where once thy parents dwelt ? or did they keep,
 In humbler life, the lowing herds and sheep ?
 So left perhaps to tend the fleecy train,
 Rude pirates seiz'd, and shipp'd thee o'er the main ?
 Doom'd a fair prize to grace some prince's board, 420
 The worthy purchase of a foreign lord.

If then my fortunes can delight my friend,
 A story fruitful of events, attend :
 Another's sorrow may thy ear enjoy,
 And wine the lengthen'd intervals employ. 425
 Long nights the now declining year bestows ;
 A part we consecrate to soft repose,
 A part in pleasing talk we entertain ;
 For too much rest itself becomes a pain.

v. 426. *Long nights the now declining year bestows, &c.*] From hence we may conclude, that the return of Ulysses was probably in the decline of the year, in the latter part of the autumn, and not in the summer ; the nights then being short cannot be called Νύκτες ἀδύσπατοι. Eustathius.

v. 429. — *Too much rest itself becomes a pain.*] This aphorism is agreeable to nature and experience ; the same thing is asserted by Hippocrates, " Sleep or watchfulness, when excessive, become diseases ;" too much sleep occasions an excess of perspiration, and consequently weakens and dissipates the animal spirits. Dacier.

Let those, whom sleep invites, the call obey,

430

Their cares resuming with the dawning day :

Here let us feast, and to the feast be join'd

Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind ;

Review the series of our lives, and taste

The melancholy joy of evils past :

435

For he who much has suffer'd, much will know ;

And pleas'd remembrance builds delight on woe.

Above Ortygia lies an isle of fame,

Far hence remote, and Syria is the name ;

(There curious eyes inscrib'd with wonder trace 440

The sun's diurnal, and his annual race)

v. 434. ————— and taste

The melancholy joy of evils past.]

There is undoubtedly a great pleasure in the remembrance of past sufferings : nay, calamity has this advantage over prosperity ; an evil when past turns into a comfort ; but a past pleasure though innocent, leaves in its room an anxiety for the want of it, and if it be a guilty pleasure, a remorse. The reason (observes Eustathius) why past evils delight, is from the consciousness of the praise due to our prudence, and patience under them, from the sense of our felicity in being delivered from them, and from gratitude to divine providence, which has delivered us. It is the joy of good men to believe themselves the favourites of heaven.

438. *Ortygia.*] This is an ancient name of Delos, so called from ὄρνις, a quail, from the great numbers of those birds found upon that island. Lycophron, in his obscure way of writing, calls it ὄρνις πτερυμένη, or the winged quail ; perhaps from the fable of Asteria being turned into that bird in her flight from Jupiter, and giving name to the island from the transformation she suffered upon it. It is one of the Cyclades, and lies in the Ægean ocean. Syria, or Syros, is another small island lying eastward of Ithaca, according to true geography.

v. 440. *There curious eyes inscrib'd with wonder trace*

The sun's diurnal, and his annual race.]

The words in Homer are τροπαὶ ἡελίου, or "solis conversiones." Monsieur Perrault insults the poet as ignorant of geography, for placing Syros under the Tropick ; an error (says he) which commentators in vain have laboured to defend, by having recourse to a sun-dial of Pherecydes on which the motions of the sun (the τροπαὶ ἡελίου) were designed. The last defence would indeed be ridiculous, since Pherecydes flourished three hundred years after the time of Homer ; no one (replies Monsieur Boileau) was ever at any

Not large, but fruitful ; stor'd with grafs to keep
The bellowing oxen, and the bleating sheep ;

difficulty about the sense of this passage ; Eustathius proves that *τρέπεσθαι* signifies the same as *δύνειν*, and denotes the setting of the sun ; so that the words mean, that Syros is situate above Ortygia, on that side where the sun sets, or westerly, *πρὸς τὰ δυτικὰ μέρη τῆς Ὀρτυγίας*. It is true, Eustathius mentions a bower, *Σπήλαιον*, in which the conversions of the sun were figured. This indeed would fully vindicate Homer ; but Bochart and others affirm, that Eustathius is in an error, and that Syros is so far from lying to the west, or *πρὸς τροπὰς ἡλίου*, that it bears an eastern position both with respect to Ithaca and Delos : how is this objection to be answered ? Bochart, p. 411. of his *Geographia sacra*, explains it by having recourse to the bower mentioned by Eustathius, in which the motions of the sun were drawn. Pherecydes (says Hesychius Milesius) having collected the writings of the Phœnicians, from the use of them alone without any instructor, became famous in the world by the strength of his own genius : and Laertius writes, that an Heliotrope made by him was preserved in the island of Syros. Thus it is evident, that he borrowed his knowledge from the Phœnicians, and probably his skill in astronomy, they being very expert in that science, by reason of its use in their navigation. Why then might there not be a machine which exhibited the motions of the sun, made by the Phœnicians, and why might not Homer be acquainted with it ? It is probable that Pherecydes took his pattern from this Heliotrope, which being one of the greatest rarities of antiquity, might give a great reputation to Syros, and consequently was worthy to be celebrated by Homer, the great preserver of antiquities. “ Fallitur igitur, (says Bochart) Eustathius, “ cum vult intelligi, quasi sita sit Syrus ad occiduas partes Deli ; “ cum contra Deli ad ortum sit Syrus, non ad occasum ; & rem “ sic se habere ex ipso Homero patet, apud quem Eumæus in Ithaca, Syriam asserit esse trans Delum, quo nihil dici potuit falsius, si Syrus sit ad occasum Deli.” If this answer appears to any person too studied and abstruse, the difficulty may be solved, by supposing Eumæus speaking of Delos, as it lay with respect to Syrus, before he was carried from it ; for instance, if Syrus lies on the east of Delos to a man in Ithaca, both Ithaca and Delos will lie on the west of Syrus to one of that island ; I would therefore imagine that Eumæus speaks as a native of Syrus, and not as a sojourner in Ithaca, and then Delos will lie towards the sun-setting, or *πρὸς ἡλίου τροπὰς* : but this last I only propose as a conjecture, not presuming to offer it as a decision.

v. 442. *Not large, but fruitful ; stor'd with grafs to keep
The bellowing oxen, and the bleating sheep.*]

It is probable that Homer was well acquainted with the nature of this island, and that it really enjoyed an admirable temperature.

Her sloping hills the mantling vines adorn,
 And her rich valleys wave with golden corn. 445
 No want, no famine the glad natives know,
 Nor sink by sickness to the shades below;
 But when a length of years unnerves the strong,
 Apollo comes, and Cynthia comes along.
 They bend the silver bow with tender skill, 450
 And void of pain, the silent arrows kill.
 Two equal tribes this fertile land divide,
 Where two fair cities rise with equal pride.
 But both in constant peace one prince obey,
 And Ctefius there, my father, holds the sway. 455
 Freightèd, it seems, with toys of ev'ry sort
 A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port;

air; and therefore was exceedingly healthful; the fertility of the soil proves the happiness of the air, which would naturally free the inhabitants from the maladies arising from a less salubrious situation. It is for this reason that they are to be slain by Diana and Apollo. All deaths that were sudden, and without sickness, were ascribed to those deities. Bochart (p. 410.) tells us, that the name of Syros was given to the island by the Phœnicians; Asira or Sira signifying "rich," in their language; or rather it was so called from Sura, or Asura, signifying "happy;" either of these derivations fully denote the excellence both of the soil and air: and that this name is of Phœnician extract is probable from the words of Homer, who assures us that they stayed a whole year upon this island, and consequently had opportunity to know the healthfulness and fertility of it.

v. 457. *A ship of Sidon* —] Here is a full testimony, that the Phœnicians were remarkable for arts and navigation over all the old world. They were expelled from their country by Joshua, (as Bochart informs us) and then settling along the sea-coasts, they spread over all the Mediterranean, and by degrees sent out colonies into Europe, Asia, and Afric; that they were in Afric appears from Procopius, where he mentions a pillar with a Phœnician inscription. Ἡμεῖς ἐσμὲν οἱ φύγοντες ἀπὸ προσώπου Ἰησοῦ τῷ ληστῇ υἱοῦ Νάν; that is, "We are a people that fly from Joshua the son of Nun, the robber;" they gave him that title out of resentment for their dispossession. The character they bear in the scriptures agrees with this in Homer. Isaiah xxiii. 2. "The merchants of Sidon, that pass over the seas;" and it likewise appears from the scriptures, that they excelled in all arts of embroidery, and works of curiosity.

What-time it chanc'd the palace entertain'd,
 Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land:
 This nymph, where anchor'd the Phœnician train 460
 To wash her robes descending to the main,
 A smooth-tongu'd sailor won her to his mind;
 (For love deceives the best of woman-kind.)
 A sudden trust from sudden liking grew;
 She told her name, her race, and all she knew. 465
 I too (she cry'd) from glorious Sidon came,
 My father Arybas, of wealthy fame;
 But snatch'd by pirates from my native place,
 The Taphians sold me to this man's embrace.

Haste then (the false designing youth reply'd) 470
 Haste to thy country; love shall be thy guide;
 Haste to thy father's house, thy father's breast,
 For still he lives, and lives with riches blest.

"Swear first (she cry'd) ye sailors! to restore

"A wretch in safety to her native shore." 475

Swift as she ask'd, the ready sailors swore.

v. 458. *What-time it chanc'd the palace entertain'd,
 Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land.]*

I was surprised to find that Eustathius mistook this Phœnician woman for the mother of Eumæus; she herself tells us, that she was only his governess.

Παῖδα γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ἐῷ ἐνὶ μεγάροις ἀτιτάλλω.

It is not probable that Eumæus would have painted his own mother in the dress of an adulteress, and an abandoned traitress: nay, he directly distinguishes his mother from this Phœnician in the sequel of the story (where he calls her *πότνια μήτηρ*, or his "venerable mother") and when he speaks of the Phœnician, he constantly calls her *γυνή*, not *μήτηρ*. Nor indeed could he have called her *πότνια* at all, if she had been a person of such a detestable character. Spondanus adopts the mistake of Eustathius, and endeavours to vindicate her from the manner of her frailty. "Modeste decepta donis, &c. ut eorum libidini obsecundaret," "it was a modest adultery, she being deceived by bribes to yield to their solicitation." However erroneous this opinion is, yet it shews Spondanus to be a kind and complaisant casuist.

She then proceeds : Now let our compact made
 Be nor by signal nor by word betray'd,
 Nor near me any of your crew descry'd
 By road frequented, or by fountain side. 480
 Be silence still our guard. The monarch's spies
 (For watchful age is ready to surmise)
 Are still at hand ; and this, reveal'd, must be
 Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.
 Your vessel loaded, and your traffic past, 485
 Dispatch a wary messenger with haste :
 Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
 And more, the infant-offspring of the king.
 Him, child-like wand'ring forth, I'll lead away,
 (A noble prize !) and to your ship convey. 490
 Thus spoke the dame, and homeward took the road.
 A year they traffic, and their vessel load.
 Their stores compleat, and ready now to weigh,
 A spy was sent their summons to convey :
 An artist to my father's palace came, 495
 With gold and amber chains, elab'rate frame :
 Each female eye the glitt'ring links employ,
 They turn, review, and cheapen ev'ry toy.
 He took th' occasion as they stood intent,
 Gave her the sign, and to his vessel went. 500
 She straight pursu'd, and seiz'd my willing arm ;
 I follow'd smiling, innocent of harm.

v. 502. *I followed smiling, innocent of harm.*] There is a little incredibility in this narration ; for if Eumæus was such an infant as he is described to be at the time when he was betrayed by his Phœnician governess, what probability is there that he should be able to retain all these particulars so circumstantially ? He was not of an age capable of making, or remembering so many observations. The answer is, that he afterwards learned them from Laertes, who bought him of the Phœnicians : and no doubt they told him the quality of Eumæus, to enhance the price and make the better bargain. It is also natural to imagine, that Eumæus, when he grew up to manhood, would be inquisitive after his own birth and fortunes, and therefore might probably learn these particulars from Laertes. Eustathius,

Three golden goblets in the porch she found,
 (The guests not enter'd, but the table crown'd)
 Hid in her fraudulent bosom, these she bore : 505
 Now set the sun, and darken'd all the shore.
 Arriving then, where tilting on the tides
 Prepar'd to lanch the freighted vessel rides ;
 Aboard they heave us, mount their decks, and sweep
 With level oar along the glassy deep. 510
 Six calmy days and six smooth nights we sail,
 And constant Jove supply'd the gentle gale.
 The seventh, the fraudulent wretch, (no cause descry'd)
 Touch'd by Diana's vengeful arrow dy'd.
 Down dropt the caitiff-corse, a worthless load, 515
 Down to the deep ; there roll'd, the future food
 Of fierce sea-wolves, and monsters of the flood. }
 An helpless infant, I remain'd behind ;
 Thence borne to Ithaca by wave and wind ;
 Sold to Laertes, by divine command, 520
 And now adopted to a foreign land.

v. 511. *Six calmy days, &c.*] It is evident from this passage, that it is above six days sail from Ithaca to Syros, though carried with favourable winds. Dacier.

v. 514. — *Diana's vengeful arrow* —] I would just observe the poetical justice of Homer, in the punishment of this Phœnician. Misfortune generally pursues wickedness, and though we escape the vengeance of man, yet heaven frequently overtakes us when we think we are in security, and death calls us from our impious acquisitions.

v. 521. *And now adopted to a foreign land.*] Homer has here given us an history of the life of Eumæus ; the episode contains near an hundred lines, and may seem entirely foreign to the action of the Odyssey. I will not affirm that it is in every respect to be justified. The main story is at a stand ; but we are to consider that this relation takes up but small part of one leisure evening, and that the action cannot proceed till the return of Telemachus. It is of use to set off the character of Eumæus, and shew him to be a person of quality, worthy to be an agent in an epic poem, where every character ought to be remote from meanness : so the story has a distant relation to the Odyssey, and perhaps is not to be looked upon merely as an excrescence from the main building, but a small projection to adorn it.

To him the king. Receiting thus thy cares,
 My secret soul in all thy sorrows shares :
 But one choice blessing (such is Jove's high will)
 Has sweeten'd all thy bitter draught of ill : 525
 Torn from thy country to no hapless end,
 The gods have, in a master, giv'n a friend.
 Whatever frugal nature needs is thine,
 (For she needs little) daily bread and wine.
 While I, so many wand'rings past and woes, 530
 Live but on what thy poverty bestows.

So past in pleasing dialogue away
 The night ; then down to short repose they lay ;
 'Till radiant rose the messenger of day. }
 While in the port of Ithaca, the band 535
 Of young Telemachus approach'd the land ;
 Their sails they loos'd, they lash'd the mast aside,
 And cast their anchors, and the cables ty'd :
 Then on the breezy shore descending join
 In grateful banquet o'er the rosy wine. 540
 When thus the prince : Now each his course pursue ;
 I to the fields, and to the city you.
 Long absent hence, I dedicate this day
 My swains to visit, and the works survey.
 Expect me with the morn, to pay the skies 545
 Our debt of safe return, in feast and sacrifice.

Then Theoclymenus. But who shall lend,
 Meantime, protection to thy stranger-friend ?

v. 534. *'Till radiant rose the messenger of day.*] This is the morning of the thirty-eighth day since the beginning of the *Odyssey*. It is observable that Telemachus takes more time in his return from Pylos, than in sailing thither from his own country ; for in the latter end of the second book he sets sail after sun-setting, and reached Pyle in the morning : here he embarks in the afternoon, and yet arrives not at Ithaca till after break of day. The reason of it is not to be ascribed to a less prosperous wind, but to the greater compass he was obliged to fetch, to escape the ambush of the suitors. In the former voyage he steered a direct course ; in this he sails round about to the north of Ithaca, and therefore wastes more time in his voyage to it.

Straight to the queen and palace shall I fly,
Or yet more distant, to some lord apply ?

550

The prince return'd. Renown'd in days of yore
Has stood our father's hospitable door ;

No other roof a stranger shou'd receive,
Nor other hands than ours the welcome give.

But in my absence riot fills the place,
Nor bears the modest queen a stranger's face,

555

From noiseful revel far remote she flies,
But rarely seen, or seen with weeping eyes.

No — let Eurymachus receive my guest,
Of nature courteous, and by far the best ;

560

He wooes the queen with more respectful flame,
And emulates her former husband's fame :

With what success, 'tis Jove's alone to know,
And the hop'd nuptials turn to joy or woe.

Thus speaking, on the right up-soar'd in air 565
The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger ;

v. 561. *He wooes the queen with more respectful flame,
And emulates her former husband's fame.*]

The words in the original are ἔδυσσεν γέρας ἕξεν, which may either be rendered, "to obtain the honour of marrying Penelope," agreeably to the former part of the verse ; or it means that Eurymachus has the fairest hopes to marry Penelope, and "obtain the "throne" or γέρας of Ulysses. Hobbs translates the verse almost obscenely in the former sense :

—— — He best loves my mother ;
And what my father did, would do the same.

The former in my judgment is the better construction, especially because it avoids a tautology, and gives a new image in the second part of the verse, very different from the sense expressed in the former part of it. But of all the meanings it is capable of I should prefer this ; "That he courts her upon the most honourable principles, and seems desirous to have the honour of Ulysses, by imitating his worth : " and this is agreeable to the character of Eurymachus, which distinguishes him from all the other suitors.

v. 566. *The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger.*] The augury is thus to be interpreted ; Ulysses is the hawk, the suitors the pigeon ; the hawk denotes the valour of Ulysses, being a bird of prey ;

His deathful pounces tore a trembling dove;
 The clotted feathers, scatter'd from above,
 Between the hero and the vessel pour
 Thick plumage, mingled with a sanguine show'r. 570

Th' observing augur took the prince aside,
 Seiz'd by the hand, and thus prophetic cry'd.
 Yon' bird that dexter cuts th' aerial road,
 Rose ominous, nor flies without a god:
 No race but thine shall Ithaca obey, 575
 To thine, for ages, heav'n decrees the sway.
 Succeed the omen, gods! (the youth rejoin'd)
 Soon shall my bounties speak a grateful mind,
 And soon each envy'd happiness attend
 The man, who calls Telemachus his friend. 580
 Then to Peiræus — Thou whom time has prov'd
 A faithful servant, by the prince belov'd!

the pigeon represents the cowardice of the suitors, that bird being remarkable for her timorous nature. The hawk flies on the right, to denote success to Ulysses.

Homer calls this bird the messenger of Apollo; not that this augury was sent by that deity, (though that be no forced interpretation) but the expression implies, that the hawk was sacred to Apollo; as the peacock was to Juno, the owl to Pallas, and the eagle to Jupiter. Thus Ælian, anim. lib. x. c. 14. Αἰγυπῆσι τὸν ἱέρακα τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι τιμᾶν εἰκόσιν, &c. and he gives the reason of it, for the hawk is the only bird that is capable to bear the lustre of the sun without inconvenience and difficulty; the same is said of the eagle, but this hawk is reckoned to be of the æquiline kind. It was death among the Ægyptians to kill this bird, because it was dedicated to Apollo.

There is another reason why any bird that was taken notice of by way of augury, may be said to be the messenger of Apollo, that deity presiding over divination.

v. 571. *Th' observing augur took the prince aside.*] The reason why Theoclymenus withdraws Telemachus, while he interprets the augury, is not apparent at the first view, but he does it out of an apprehension lest he should be overheard by some of the company, who might disclose the secret to the suitors, and such a discovery might prove fatal to his own person, or to the fortunes of Telemachus. Eustathius.

v. 581. *Then to Peiræus — Thou whom time has prov'd, &c.*] We find that Telemachus intended to deliver Theoclymenus to the care

'Till we returning shall our guest demand,
Accept this charge with honour, at our hand.

To this Peiræus; Joyful I obey, 585
Well pleas'd the hospitable rites to pay.
The presence of thy guest shall best reward
(If long thy stay) the absence of my lord.

With that, their anchors he commands to weigh,
Mount the tall bark and lanch into the sea. 590
All with obedient haste forsake the shores,
And plac'd in order, spread their equal oars.
Then from the deck the prince his sandals takes;
Pois'd in his hand the pointed jav'lin shakes.
They part; while less'ning from the hero's view, 595
Swift to the town the well-row'd galley flew:
The hero trod the margin of the main,
And reach'd the mansion of his faithful swain.

of Eurymachus: what then is the reason why he thus suddenly alters that resolution, and intrusts him to Peiræus? This is occasioned by the discovery of the skill of Theoclymenus in augury: he fears lest the suitors should extort some prediction from him that might be detrimental to his affairs, or should he refuse it, to the person of Theoclymenus. Eustathius.

This book comprehends somewhat more than the space of two days and one night; for the vision appears to Telemachus a little before the dawn, in the night preceding the thirty-sixth day, and he lands in Ithaca, on the thirty-eighth in the morning.

T H E O D Y S S E Y.

B O O K X V I.

T H E A R G U M E N T.

The discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus.

Telemachus arriving at the lodge of Eumæus, sends him to carry Penelope the news of his return. Minerva appearing to Ulysses, commands him to discover himself to his son. The princes, who had lain in ambush to intercept Telemachus in his way, their project being defeated, return to Ithaca.

SOON as the morning blush'd along the plains,
Ulysses, and the monarch of the swains,
Awake the sleeping fires, their meal prepare,
And forth to pasture send the bristly care.

v. 1. *Soon as the morning blush'd along the plains, &c.*] This book opens with the greatest simplicity imaginable. Dionysius Halicarnassius quotes the sixteen first lines to this purpose: the poet, says that author, describes a low and vulgar action, yet gives it an inexpressible sweetness; the ear is pleased with the harmony of the poetry, and yet there is nothing noble in the sentiments. Whence, continues he, does this arise? from the choice of the words, or from the placing of them? No one will affirm that it consists in the choice of the words; for the diction is entirely low and vulgar, so vulgar that a common artificer or peasant, who never studied elocution, would use it in conversation; turn the verses into prose, and this will appear. There are no transpositions, no figures, no variety of dialect, nor any new and studied expressions. Where then is the beauty of the poetry? It must be entirely ascribed to the harmonious juncture and position of the words; and he concludes that the collocation of words has a greater efficacy both in prose and poetry, than the choice. And indeed a judicious

The prince's near approach the dogs descry,
And fawning round his feet confess their joy.

disposition of them (like what is feigned of Minerva in this book) makes a mean, deformed, and vulgar period, rise, like Ulysses from beggary, into pomp and dignity. This may be exemplified from the rules of mechanic arts: an architect, when he gathers his materials for a building, has these three things chiefly in view: first, with what piece of stone, wood, &c. a correspondent piece will best agree: next he considers their several formations, and how it will best stand in the structure; and lastly, if any part of the materials suits not with the allotted place, he rejects it or new shapes it, till it agrees with the whole work: the same care is to be taken by a good writer: he is first to consider what noun or verb is to be joined to other nouns or verbs so fitly as not possibly to be placed more conveniently; for a promiscuous connecting of words indiscriminately spoils both prose and poetry: next he considers the frame or turn of the verb or noun, and how it will stand in the place he allots it; and if it suits not exactly, he changes it, sometimes by varying the numbers, sometimes the cases, and at other times the genders: and lastly, if a word prove so stubborn as not to bend to the level of the period, he intirely rejects it, and introduces another that preserves a due conformity; or at least, if an inharmonious word be necessary, he places it so judiciously between more agreeable and tuneful words, that their harmony steals away our imagination from observing the roughness of the others: like wise generals, who in ordering the ranks of their soldiers, strengthen the weaker files by sustaining them with the stronger; and by this method render the whole invincible. See likewise cap. xxii. of Longinus, of the disposition of words.

v. 3. ————— *their meal prepare.* } The word in the original is *ἄριστον*, which here denotes very evidently the morning repast: it is used but in one other place in all Homer in this sense, Iliad, lib. xxiv. v. 124.

Ἐσσυμένως ἐπένοντο καὶ ἐντύνοντο ἄριστον.

But we are not therefore to imagine that this was an usual meal; Homer in other places expresses it by *δειπνον*, as is observed by Athenæus, lib. i.

Οἱ δ' ἄρα δειπνον ἔλουντ' ἀπὸ δ' αὐτῷ θωρήσσοντο.

“At the dawn of the day they took repast and armed themselves for battle.” The Greeks had three customary meals, which are distinctly mentioned by Palamedes in Æschylus,

Ἄριστα, δειπνα, δόρυκαθ' αἰρεῖσθαι τρίτα.

Their gentle blandishment the king survey'd,
 Heard his resounding step, and instant said:

Some well-known friend (Eumæus) bends this way;
 His steps I hear; the dogs familiar play. 10

While yet he spoke, the prince advancing drew
 Nigh to the lodge, and now appear'd in view.
 Transported from his seat Eumæus sprung,
 Dropp'd the full bowl, and round his bosom hung;

Homer, adds Athenæus, mentions a fourth repast, lib. xvii. of the *Odyssey*:

————— σὺ δ' ἔρχεο δειλιήσας.

This the Romans called "commessationem," we a collation, a repast taken, as the same author explains it, between dinner and supper; the word is derived from ἀπὸ τῆς δειλῆς ὀψίας, or "the evening twilight." But Athenæus refutes himself, lib. v. p. 103. I have already (says he) observed that the antients eat thrice a day; and it is ridiculous to imagine that they eat four times from these words of Homer,

————— σὺ δ' ἔρχεο δειλιήσας.

For that expression meant only that Eumæus should return in the evening, δειλινὸν διατρίψας χρόνον. But this is not the full import of the word δειλιήσας, for it undoubtedly means, to take the evening repast or supper, as is evident from the conclusion of the seventeenth book of the *Odyssey*: "Return, says Telemachus to Eumæus, but first take refreshment;" and Eumæus accordingly eats, and the poet immediately adds, "because the evening was come," or ἐπῆλυθε δειλὸν ἡμᾶρ. However, in no sense can this word be brought to prove that the Greeks eat four times in the day: but if any person will imagine, that it signifies in that place an immediate meal, all that can be gathered from it is, that Telemachus out of kindness to Eumæus commands him to eat before the usual hour of repast, before he leaves his palace: but Hesychius rightly interprets it by τὸ δειλινὸν λάβων ἑμβρομα, that is, "eating his supper;" for as δεῖπνον and ἀριστον signify the dinner, so δόρπον and δειλινὸν denote the time of supper promiscuously.

I will add no more, but refer the reader for a full explication of δεῖπνον, ἀριστον and δειλινὸν, to lib. viii. Quest. 6. of Plutarch's *Symposiasts*.

v. 14. *Dropp'd the full bowl* —————] In the original it is, Eumæus dropped the bowl as he tempered it with water. It was customary not to drink wine unmixed with water among the antients; there was no certain proportion observed in the mixture, some to one vessel of wine poured in two of water, others to two

Kissing his cheek, his hand, while from his eye 15
The tears rain'd copious in a show'r of joy.

As some fond fire who ten long winters grieves,
From foreign climes an only son receives,
(Child of his age) with strong paternal joy
Forward he springs, and clasps the fav'rite boy: 20
So round the youth his arms Eumæus spread,
As if the grave had giv'n him from the dead.

And is it thou? my ever-dear delight!
O art thou come to bless my longing sight!
Never, I never hop'd to view this day, 25
When o'er the waves you plough'd the desp'rate way.
Enter, my child! beyond my hopes restor'd,
O give these eyes to feast upon their lord.
Enter, oh seldom seen! for lawless pow'rs
Too much detain thee from these silvan bow'rs. 30

The prince reply'd; Eumæus, I obey;
To seek thee, friend, I hither took my way.

of wine five of water. Homer tells us that the wine of Maroa was so strong as to require twenty measures of water to one of wine; but perhaps this is spoken hyperbolically, to shew the uncommon strength of it. The Lacedæmonians used to boil their wine till the fifth part was consumed, and then keeping it four years, drank it: but sometimes the Grecians drank it without water (but this they called reproachfully *ἐπισκυβίται*, or to act like a Scythian, from whom they borrowed the custom.) It was usual even for children to drink wine thus tempered amongst the Grecians: thus in this book Eurymachus,

————— *ἐπίσχε δὲ οἶνον ἐρυθρόν.*

And Phænix in the ninth of the Iliad, speaking of Achilles;

————— *οἶνον ἐπίσχω*
Πολλάκι μοι κατεδέυσας.

At Athens there was an altar erected to Bacchus *ἑθιος*, because from thus tempering the wine men returned "upright" or sober from entertainments; and a law was enacted by Amphitrion, and afterwards revived by Selon, that no unmixed wine should be drank at any entertainment.

But say, if in the court the queen reside
Severely chaste, 'or if commenc'd a bride?

Thus he: and thus the monarch of the swains; 35
Severely chaste Penelope remains,
But lost to ev'ry joy, she wastes the day
In tedious cares, and weeps the night away.

He ended, and (receiving as they pass
The jav'lin, pointed with a star of brags) 40
They reach'd the dome; the dome with marble shin'd.
His seat Ulysses to the prince resign'd.

v. 33. ——— if in the court the queen reside
Severely chaste, or if commenc'd a bride?

Homer here makes use of a proverbial expression. It may thus be literally translated,

Or say if obstinate no more to wed,
She dooms to spiders nets th' imperial bed:

Telemachus means by this question, if Penelope be determined no more to marry; for the marriage-bed was esteemed so sacred, that upon the decease or absence of the husband, it remained unused.

Eustathius quotes the same expression from other authors of antiquity; thus Hesiod,

Ἐκ δ' ἀγέων ἐλασείας ἀράχνια.

"You shall clear the vessels from spiders webs;" meaning that "you shall have so full employment for your vessels, that the spiders shall no more spread their looms there." And another poet praying for peace, wishes spiders may weave their nets upon the soldiers arms; ἕτερος ποιήτης ἐθέλων εἰρήνην εὐξασθαι, ἀράχνας ἐπιύχεται νήματα ὑφάναι τοῖς ὅπλοις. Thus we find among the Greeks it was an expression of dignity, and applied to great and serious occasions; I am not certain that it is so used by the Romans. Catullus uses it jocosely, speaking of his empty purse.

" ——— nam tui Catulli

" Plenus sacculus est araneorum."

Plautus does the same in his Aulularia:

" ——— anne quis ædes auferat?

" Nam hic apud nos nihil est aliud quæsti furibus,

" Ita inaniis sunt oppletæ, atque araneis."

I am doubtful if it be not too mean an image for English poetry.

Not so — (exclaims the prince with decent grace)
For me, this house shall find an humbler place:

T' usurp the honours due to silver hairs
And rev'rend strangers, modest youth forbears.

Instant the swain the spoils of beasts supplies,
And bids the rural throne with osiers rise.

There sat the prince: the feast Eumæus spread,
And heap'd the shining canisters with bread.

Thick o'er the board the plenteous viands lay,
The frugal remnants of the former day.

Then in a bowl he tempers gen'rous wines,
Around whose verge a mimic ivy twines.

And now the rage of thirst and hunger fled,
Thus young Ulysses to Eumæus said.

Whence father, from what shore this stranger, say?
What vessel bore him o'er the wat'ry way?

v. 43. *Not so — (exclaims the prince) —*] Nothing can more strongly represent the respect which antiquity paid to strangers, than this conduct of Telemachus: Ulysses is in rags, in the disguise of a beggar, and yet a prince refuses to take his seat. I doubt not but every good man will be pleased with such instances of benevolence and humanity to his fellow-creatures; one well-natured action is preferable to a thousand great ones, and Telemachus appears with more advantage upon this heap of hides and osiers, than a tyrant upon his throne.

v. 52. *The frugal remnants of the former day.*] This entertainment is neither to be ascribed to parsimony nor poverty, but to the custom and hospitality of former ages. It was a common expression among the Greeks at table, "leave something for the Medes;" intimating that something ought to be left for a guest that might come accidentally. Plutarch in his seventh book of the Sympos. question 3. commends this conduct. Eumæus (says that author) a wise scholar of a wise master, is no way decomposed, when Telemachus pays him a visit, he immediately sets before him

The frugal remnants of the former day.

Besides, the table was accounted sacred to the gods, and nothing that was sacred was permitted to be empty; this was another reason why the antients always reserved part of their provisions, not solely out of hospitality to men, but piety to the gods.

To human step our land impervious lies,
And round the coast circumfluent oceans rise. 60

The swain returns. A tale of sorrows hear;
In spacious Crete he drew his natal air,
Long doom'd to wander o'er the land and main,
For heav'n has wove his thread of life with pain.
Half-breathless 'scaping from the land he flew 65
From Thesprot mariners, a murd'rous crew.

To thee my son the suppliant I resign,
I gave him my protection, grant him thine.
Hard task, he cries, thy virtue gives thy friend,
Willing to aid, unable to defend. 70

v. 70. *Willing to aid, ———*] It has been observed that Homer intended to give us the picture of a complete hero in his two poems, drawn from the characters of Achilles and Ulysses: Achilles has consummate valour, but wants the wisdom of Ulysses: Ulysses has courage, but courage inclining to caution and stratagem, as much as that of Achilles to rashness. Virgil endeavoured to form a complete hero in Æneas, by joining in his person the forward courage of Achilles, with the wisdom of Ulysses, and by this conduct gives us a perfect character. The same observation holds good with respect to the subordinate characters introduced into the two poems of the Iliad and Odyssey; and makes an essential difference between them: thus the Iliad exhibiting an example of heroic valour, almost all the characters are violent and heroic. Diomed, Ajax, Hector, &c. are all chiefly remarkable for courage: but the Odyssey being intended to represent the patience and wisdom of an hero, almost all the characters are distinguished by benevolence and humanity. Telemachus and Eumæus, Alcinous, Nestor and Menelaus, are every where represented in the mild light of wisdom and hospitality. This makes a continued difference of style in the poetry of the two poems, and the characters of the agents in the Odyssey necessarily exhibit lectures of piety and morality. The reader should keep this in his view. In reading Homer, the Odyssey is to be looked upon as a sequel of the Iliad, and then he will find in the two poems the perfection of human nature, consummate courage joined with consummate piety. He must be an unobserving reader, who has not taken notice of that "vein of humanity" that runs through the whole Odyssey; and a bad man, that has not been pleased with it. In my opinion, Eumæus tending his herds is more amiable than Achilles in all his destructive glory. There is scarce a speech made in the Odyssey by Eumæus, Telemachus or Ulysses, but what tends to the improvement of mankind: it was this that endeared the Odyssey to

Can strangers safely in the court reside,
 Midst the swell'd insolence of lust and pride?
 Ev'n I unsafe: the queen in doubt to wed,
 Or pay due honours to the nuptial bed?
 Perhaps she weds regardless of her fame,
 Deaf to the mighty Ulyssæan name. 75
 However, stranger! from our grace receive
 Such honours as besit a prince to give;
 Sandals, a sword, and robes, respect to prove,
 And safe to sail with ornaments of love. 80
 'Till then, thy guest amid the rural train
 Far from the court, from danger far, detain.
 'Tis mine with food the hungry to supply,
 And cloath the naked from th' inclement sky.
 Here dwell in safety from the suitors wrongs,
 And the rude insults of ungovern'd tongues. 85
 For should'st thou suffer, pow'rless to relieve
 I must behold it, and can only grieve.
 The brave encompass'd by an hostile train,
 O'erpower'd by numbers, is but brave in vain. 90
 To whom, while anger in his bosom glows,
 With warmth replies the man of mighty woes.

the antients, and Homer's sentences of morality were in every mouth, and introduced in all conversations, for the better conduct of human life. This verse was thus applied by some of the antients; a person being asked what was the duty of an orator, or pleader, answered from Homer,

Ἄνδρ' ἀπαμύνασθαι ὅτε τις ᾤστέρος χαλεπὴν.

In short, I will not deny but that the Iliad is by far the nobler poem, with respect to the poetry; it is fit to be read by kings and heroes; but the Odyssey is of use to all mankind, as it teaches us to be good men rather than great, and to prefer morality to glory.

v. 92 *With warmth replies the man of mighty woes*] There is not a more spirited speech in all the Odyssey than this of Ulysses; his resentment arises from the last words of Telemachus, observes Eustathius:

The brave encompass'd by an hostile train,
 O'erpower'd by numbers, is but brave in vain,

Since audience mild is deign'd, permit my tongue
 At once to pity and resent thy wrong.
 My heart weeps blood, to see a soul so brave 95
 Live to base insolence of pow'r a slave.
 But tell me, dost thou prince, dost thou behold,
 And hear, their midnight revels uncontroll'd?
 Say, do thy subjects in bold faction rise,
 Or priests in fabled oracles advise? 100
 Or are thy brothers, who should aid thy pow'r,
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour?
 O that I were from great Ulysses sprung,
 Or that these wither'd nerves like thine were strung;
 Or, heav'ns! might he return! (and soon appear 105
 He shall, I trust; a hero scorns despair)

He is preparing his son for the destruction of the suitors, and animating him against despair by reason of their numbers. This he brings about, by representing that a brave man in a good cause prefers death to dishonour. By the same method Homer exalts the character of Ulysses: Telemachus thinks it impossible to resist the suitors, Ulysses not only resists them, but almost without assistance works their destruction. There is a fine contrast between the tried courage of Ulysses, and the inexperience of Telemachus.

v. 105. ————— (and soon appear
He shall, I trust; a hero scorns despair).]

Some antient critics, as Eustathius informs us, rejected this verse, and thus read the passage:

Ἦ παῖς ἐξ Ὀδυσῆος ἀνύμωνος, ἢ καὶ αὐτὸς;
 Αὐτίκ' ἔπειτ' ἀπ' ἐμεῖο κάρη τάμοι ἀλλότριος φῶς.

Then the sense will be, "Oh that I were the son of Ulysses, or Ulysses himself, &c."

For, add they, if this verse be admitted, it breaks the transport of Ulysses's resentment, and cools the warmth of the expression; Eustathius confesses that he was once of the same opinion, but afterwards seems dubious; for continues he, Ulysses by saying, "Oh that I were the son of Ulysses, or Ulysses himself," gave room to suspect that he was himself Ulysses; and therefore to efface this impression, he adds with great address,

————— (and soon appear
 He shall, I trust; a hero scorns despair)

Might he return, I yield my life a prey
 To my worst foe, if that avenging day
 Be not their last: but should I lose my life
 Oppress'd by numbers in the glorious strife, 110
 I chuse the nobler part, and yield my breath,
 Rather than bear dishonour, worse than death;
 Than see the hand of violence invade
 The rev'rend stranger, and the spotless maid;
 Than see the wealth of kings consum'd in waste, 115
 The drunkards revel, and the gluttons feast.

Thus he, with anger flashing from his eye;
 Sincere the youthful hero made reply.
 Nor leagu'd in factious arms my subjects rise,
 Nor priests in fabled oracles advise; 120
 Nor are my brothers who should aid my pow'r
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour.
 Ah me! I boast no brother; heav'n's dread king
 Gives from our stock an only branch to spring:
 Alone Laertes reign'd Arcefius' heir, 125
 Alone Ulysses drew the vital air,
 And I alone the bed connubial grac'd,
 An unblest offspring of a fire unblest!

and by this method removes all jealousy that might arise from his former expression. Dacier misrepresents Eustathius; she says, "Il avoit donné lieu à quelque subcon qu'il ne fust véritablement Ulysse;" whereas he directly says, *μη υποπτευθῆ ὅτι Ὀδυσσεύς ἔστιν ὁ λαλῶν*, that is, "he uses this expression, that it may not be suspected that he is Ulysses who speaks:" in reality he inserts these words solely to avoid discovery, not judging it yet reasonable to reveal himself to Telemachus, much less to Eumæus.

v. 108. *To my worst foe* ———] The words in Greek are ἀλλότριος φῶς, or, "may I fall by the hand of a stranger:" that is, by the worst of enemies, foreigners being usually the most barbarous enemies. This circumstance therefore aggravates the calamity. Eustathius.

v. 127. *And I alone the bed connubial grac'd*] Homer mentions but one son of Ulysses; other authors name another, Archefilaus; and Sophocles, Euryalus slain by Telemachus; but perhaps these descended not from Penelope. Eustathius.

Each neighb'ring realm, conducive to our woe,
Sends forth her peers, and ev'ry peer a foe: 130

The court proud Samos and Dulichium fills,
And lofty Zacynth crown'd with shady hills.

Ev'n Ithaca and all her lords invade

Th' imperial scepter, and the regal bed:

The queen averse to love, yet aw'd by pow'r, 135
Seems half to yield, yet flies the bridal hour:

Meantime their licence uncontroll'd, I bear;

Ev'n now they envy me the vital air:

But heav'n will sure revenge, and gods there are. }

But go, Eumæus! to the queen impart 140
Our safe return, and ease a mother's heart.

Yet secret go; for num'rous are my foes,

And here at least I may in peace repose.

To whom the swain, I hear, and I obey:

But old Laertes weeps his life away, 145

And deems thee lost: shall I my speed employ

To bless his age, a messenger of joy?

The mournful hour that tore his son away

Sent the sad fire in solitude to stray;

v. 140. *But go, Eumæus! to the queen impart.*] There is nothing more wonderful in Homer, than the distribution of his incidents; and how fully must he be possessed of his whole subject, and take it in all at one view, to bring about the several parts of it naturally? Minerva in the beginning of the fifteenth book commanded Telemachus to dispatch Eumæus to Penelope, to inform her of his return. Here this command is executed: but is this all the use the poet makes of that errand? It is evident it is not: this command furnishes him with a natural occasion for the removal of Eumæus while Ulysses discovers himself to Telemachus. But why might not the discovery have been made before Eumæus? It was suitable to the cautious character of Ulysses not to trust the knowledge of his person to too many people: besides, if he had here revealed himself to Eumæus, there would not have been room for the discovery which is made in the future parts of the Odyssey, and consequently the reader had been robbed of the pleasure of it: and it must be allowed, that the several concealments and discoveries of Ulysses through the Odyssey add no small pleasure and beauty to it.

Yet busied with his slaves, to ease his woe,
 He drest the vine, and bade the garden blow,
 Nor food nor wine refus'd : but since the day
 That you to Pylos plough'd the wat'ry way,
 Nor wine nor food he tastes ; but sunk in woes,
 Wild springs the vine, no more the garden blows :
 Shut from the walks of men, to pleasure lost,
 Pensive and pale he wanders, half a ghost.

Wretched old man ! (with tears the prince returns)
 Yet cease to go — what man so blest but mourns ?
 Were ev'ry wish indulg'd by fav'ring skies,
 This hour shou'd give Ulysses to my eyes.
 But to the queen with speed dispatchful bear
 Our safe return, and back with speed repair :

v. 159. *Yet cease to go — what man so blest but mourns ?* Eustathius reads the words differently, either ἀχρῦμανον πῆρ, or ἀχρῦμανοι πῆρ. If we use the former reading, it will be understood according to the recited translation ; if the latter, it must then be referred to Telemachus, and imply. “ let us cease to inform Laertes, though we grieve for him.” I suppose some critics were shocked at the words in the former sense, and thought it cruel in Telemachus not to relieve the sorrows of Laertes, which were occasioned chiefly through fondness to his person : Dacier is fully of this opinion : Eustathius prefers neither of the lectures ; I doubt not but Homer wrote ἀχρῦμανοι πῆρ ; this agrees with the whole context.

Wretched old man ! (with tears the prince returns)
 Yet cease to go — what man so blest but mourns ?
 Were every wish indulg'd by fav'ring skies,
 This hour shou'd give Ulysses to my eyes.

And as for the cruelty of Telemachus, in forbidding Eumæus to go to Laertes, there is no room for this objection : he guards against it, by requesting Penelope to give him immediate information ; which might be done almost as soon by a messenger from her, as by Eumæus. Besides, such a messenger to Laertes would be entirely foreign to the poem ; for his knowledge of the return of Telemachus could contribute nothing to the design of the Odyssey : whereas the information given to Penelope has this effect ; it puts the suitors upon new measures, and instructs her how to regulate her own conduct with regard to them ; and therefore the poet judiciously dwells upon this, and passes over the other.

And let some handmaid of her train resort
To good Laertes in his rural court.

165

While yet he spoke, impatient of delay
He brac'd his sandals on, and strode away :
Then from the heav'ns the martial goddess flies
Thro' the wide fields of air, and cleaves the skies ;
In form, a virgin in soft beauty's bloom,
Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.

170

Alone to Ithacus she stood display'd,
But unapparent as a viewless shade
Escap'd Telemachus : (the pow'rs above
Seen or unseen, o'er earth at pleasure move)

175

v. 170. *In form, a virgin* —] Some of the ancient philosophers thought the poets guilty of impiety, in representing the gods assuming human appearances; Plato in particular (lib. ii. de Repub.) speaks with great severity. "If a god (says that author) changes his own shape, must he assume a more or less perfect form? Undoubtedly a shape less perfect; for a deity, as a deity, can want no perfection; therefore all change must be for the worse: now it is absurd to imagine that a deity can be willing to assume imperfection, for this would be a degradation unworthy of a divine power, and consequently it is absurd to imagine that a deity can be willing to change the form of a deity; it therefore follows, that the gods enjoying a perfection of nature, must eternally and unchangeably appear in it. Let no poet therefore (meaning Homer) persuade you that the gods assume the form of strangers, and are visible in such appearances." It must be confessed, that if Plato had thus spoken only to refute the absurd opinions of antiquity, which imagined the gods to assume unworthy shapes of bulls, dragons, swans, &c. only to perform some rape, or action unbecoming a deity, reason would have been on his side: but the argument proves too much; it supposes that a deity must lose his perfections by any appearance but of a deity; which is an error: if a god acts suitably to the character of a god, where is the degradation? Aristotle was of this judgment, in opposition to his master Plato; and thought it no diminution to a god to appear in the shape of man, the glory of the creation: in reality, it is a great honour to Homer, that his opinions agree with the verity of the Scriptures, rather than the conjectures of philosophers; nay, it is not impossible but these relations might be borrow'd from the sacred history: it being manifest that Homer had been in Ægypt, the native country of Moses, in whose writings there are frequent instances of this nature.

The dogs intelligent confess'd the tread
 Of pow'r divine, and howling, trembling fled.
 The goddess, beck'ning, waves her deathless hands;
 Dauntless the king before the goddess stands.

Then why (she said) O favour'd of the skies! 180
 Why to thy god-like son this long disguise?
 Stand forth reveal'd: with him thy cares employ
 Against thy foes; be valiant, and destroy!
 Lo I descend in that avenging hour,
 To combat by thy side, thy guardian pow'r. 185

She said, and o'er him waves her wand of gold;
 Imperial robes his manly limbs infold:

v. 176. *The dogs intelligent confess'd the tread
 Of pow'r divine ———]*

This may seem a circumstance unworthy of poetry, and ridiculous to ascribe a greater sagacity to the brute creation, than to man; but it may be answered, that it was the design of the goddess to be invisible only to Telemachus, and consequently she was visible to the dogs. But I am willing to believe that there is a deeper meaning, and a beautiful moral couched under this story: and perhaps Homer speaks thus, to give us to understand, that the brute creation itself confesses the divinity. Dacier.

v. 178. *The goddess, beck'ning, waves her deathless hands.]* The goddess evidently acts thus, that Telemachus might not hear her speak to Ulysses; for this would have made the discovery, and precluded that beautiful interview between Ulysses and Telemachus that immediately follows. It is for the same reason that she conceals herself from Telemachus, for the discovery must have been fully and convincingly made by the appearance and veracity of a deity; and then there could have been no room for all those doubts and fears of Telemachus, that enliven and beautify the manner of the discovery. The whole relation is indeed an allegory: the wisdom of Ulysses (in poetry, Minerva) suggests to him, that this is a proper time to reveal himself to Telemachus; the same wisdom (or Minerva) instructs him to dress himself like a king, that he may find the readier credit with his son: in this dress he appears a new man, young and beautiful, which gives occasion to Telemachus to imagine him a deity; especially because he was an infant when his father sailed to Troy, and therefore though he now appears like Ulysses, Telemachus does not know him to be his father. This is the naked story, when stript of its poetical ornaments.

At once with grace divine his frame improves;
 At once with majesty enlarg'd he moves:
 Youth flush'd his red'ning cheek, and from his brows
 A length of hair in sable ringlets flows; 191
 His black'ning chin receives a deeper shade;
 Then from his eyes upsprung the warrior-maid.
 The hero re-ascends: the prince o'eraw'd
 Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a god. 195

v. 194. ——— *the prince o'eraw'd*
Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a god.]

I must offer a remark in opposition to that of Dacier upon this place: "This fear of Telemachus (says that author) proceeds from the opinion of the antients when the gods came down visibly; they thought themselves so unworthy of such a manifestation, that whenever it happened, they believed they should die, or meet with some great calamity:" thus the Israelites address Moses; "Speak thou to us, and we will hear, but let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die." Thus also Gideon; "Alas! O Lord, my God, because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face; and the Lord said to him, Fear not, thou shalt not die." Hence it is very evident, that this notion prevailed amongst the Israelites: but how does it appear that the Greeks held the same opinion? The contrary is manifest almost to a demonstration: the gods are introduced almost in every book both of the Iliad and Odyssey; and yet there is not the least foundation for such an assertion: nay, Telemachus himself in the second book returns thanks to Minerva for appearing to him, and prays for a second vision.

O goddess! who descending from the skies,
 Vouchsaf'd thy presence to my longing eyes;
 Hear from thy heav'ns above, O warrior maid,
 Descend once more propitious to my aid!

It is not to be imagined that Telemachus would have preferred this prayer, if the presence of the Deity denoted death, or some great calamity; and all the heroes throughout the Iliad esteem such intercourses as their glory, and converse with the gods without any apprehensions. But whence then proceeds this fear of Telemachus? Entirely from a reverential awe and his own modesty, while he stands in the presence of a deity; for such he believes Ulysses. The words of Telemachus agree with his behaviour; he speaks the language of a man in surprise: it is this surprise at the sudden change of Ulysses, that first makes him imagine him a deity, and upon that imagination offer him sacri-

Then with surprise (surprise chafis'd by fears)
 How art thou chang'd! (he cry'd) a god appears!
 Far other vests thy limbs majestic grace,
 Far other glories lighten from thy face!
 If heav'n be thy abode, with pious care
 Lo! I the ready sacrifice prepare:
 Lo! gifts of labour'd gold adorn thy shrine,
 To win thy grace: O save us pow'r divine!

200

Few are my days, Ulysses made reply,
 Nor I, alas! descendant of the sky.

205

I am thy father. O my son! my son!
 That father, for whose sake thy days have run
 One scene of woe; to endless cares consign'd,
 And outrag'd by the wrongs of base mankind.

Then rushing to his arms, he kiss'd his boy
 With the strong raptures of a parent's joy.

210

Tears bathe his cheek, and tears the ground bedew:
 He strain'd him close, as to his breast he grew.
 Ah me! (exclaims the prince with fond desire)

Thou art not — no, thou canst not be my fire.
 Heav'n such illusion only can impose,

215

By the false joy to aggravate my woes.

Who but a god can change the general doom,
 And give to wither'd age a youthful bloom?

Late, worn with years, in weeds obscene you trod;
 Now, cloath'd in majesty, you move a god!

221

Forbear, he cry'd; for heav'n reserve that name,
 Give to thy father but a father's claim:

Other Ulysses shalt thou never see,

I am Ulysses, I (my son) am he.

225

Twice ten sad years o'er earth and ocean tost,
 'Tis giv'n at length to view my native coast.

Pallas, unconquer'd maid, my frame surrounds
 With grace divine; her pow'r admits no bounds:

fice and prayer; the whole behaviour paints the nature of man
 under surprise, and which transports the speaker into vehemence
 and emotion.

She o'er my limbs old age and wrinkles shed; 230

Now strong as youth, magnificent I tread.

The gods with ease frail man depress, or raise,

Exalt the lowly, or the proud debase.

He spoke and sat. The prince with transport flew,

Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew,

Nor less the father pour'd a social flood! 236

They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.

As the bold eagle with fierce sorrow stung,

Or parent vultur, mourns her ravish'd young;

v. 238. *As the bold eagle* ———] This is a beautiful comparison; but to take its full force, it is necessary to observe the nature of this *φῶν* or vultur: Homer does not compare Ulysses to that bird merely for its dignity, it being of the aquiline kind, and therefore the king of birds; but from the knowledge of the nature of it, which doubles the beauty of the allusion: this bird is remarkable for the love it bears towards its young: "Tearing open her own thigh, she feeds her young with her own blood:" thus also another author;

Τὸν μηρὸν ἐκτέμνοντες, ἡμαλώμενοις
Γάλακτος ὀλοῦς ζωπύρυσσι τὰ βρέφη.

"Femore exsecto, sanguineo lactis defluxu suos fœtus refocillant." And the Egyptians made the vultur their hieroglyphic, to represent a compassionate nature. This gives a reason why this bird is introduced with peculiar propriety to represent the fondness of Ulysses for Telemachus. But where is the point of the similitude? Ulysses embraces his son, but the vultur is said to mourn the loss of her young: Eustathius answers, that the sorrow alone, and vehemence of it, is intended to be illustrated by the comparison; I think he should have added the affection Ulysses bears to Telemachus.

It is observable, that Homer inserts very few similitudes in his Odyssey, though they occur frequently in almost every book of the Iliad. The Odyssey is wrote with more simplicity, and consequently there is less room for allusions. If we observe the similes themselves inserted in each poem, we shall find the same difference: in the Iliad they are drawn from lions, storms, torrents, conflagrations, thunder, &c. In the Odyssey, from lower objects, from an heap of thorns, from a shipwright plying the wimble, an armourer tempering iron, a matron weeping over her dying husband, &c. The similes are likewise generally longer in the Iliad than the Odyssey, and less resemblance between the thing illustrated, and the illustration; the reason is, in the Iliad the

They cry, they scream, their unfledg'd brood a prey
To some rude churl, and borne by stealth away; 241

similitudes are introduced to illustrate some great and noble object, and therefore the poet proceeds till he has raised some noble image to inflame the mind of the reader; whereas in these calmer scenes the poet keeps closer to the point of allusion, and needs only to represent the object, to render it entertaining: by the former conduct he raises our admiration above the subject, by adding foreign embellishments; in the latter he brings the copy as close as possible to the original, to possess us with a true and equal image of it.

It has been objected by a French critic, that Homer is blameable for too great a length in his similitudes; that in the heat of an action he stops short, and turns to some allusion, which calls off our attention from the main subject. It is true, comparisons ought not to be too long, and are not to be placed in the heat of an action, as Mr. Dryden observes, but when it begins to decline: thus in the first *Æneis*, when the storm is in its fury, the poet introduces no comparison, because nothing can be more impetuous than the storm itself; but when the heat of the description abates, then lest we should cool too soon, he renews it by some proper similitude, which still keeps up our attention, and fixes the whole upon our minds. The similitude before us is thus placed at the conclusion of the hero's lamentation, and the poet by this method leaves the whole deeply fixed upon the memory. Virgil has imitated this comparison in his fourth *Georgic*, but very judiciously, substituted the nightingale in the place of the vultur, that bird being introduced to represent the mournful music of Orpheus.

“Qualis populeâ mœrens Philomela sub umbrâ
“Amisſos queritur fœtus, quos durus arator
“Observans nido implumes detraxit: at illa
“Flet noctem, &c.”

Nothing can be sweeter than this comparison of Virgil, yet the learned Huetius thinks he has found a notorious blunder in it: this nightingale (says he) in the first line sits in the shade of a poplar, and yet in the fourth she mourns by night, “flet noctem.” It is evident that Monsieur Huet mistakes the word “umbra” for the shade of a tree, which it casts while the sun shines upon it; whereas it only means that the bird sings “sub foliis,” or concealed in the leaves of it, which may be done by night as well as by day: but if it be thought that this is not a sufficient answer, the passage may be thus understood: the nightingale mourning under the shade of a poplar, &c. ceases not all night, or “flet noctem;” that is, she begins her song in the evening by day, but mourns all night. Either of these answers are sufficient for Virgil's vindication.

So they aloud : and tears in tides had run,
 Their grief unfinish'd with the setting sun :
 But checking the full torrent in its flow,
 The prince thus interrupts the solemn woe. 245
 What ship transported thee, O father say,
 And what blest hands have oar'd thee on the way ?

All, all (Ulysses instant made reply)
 I tell thee all, my child, my only joy !
 Phæacians bore me to the port assign'd, 250
 A nation ever to the stranger kind ;
 Wrapt in the embrace of sleep, the faithful train
 O'er seas convey'd me to my native reign :
 Embroider'd vestures, gold, and brags are laid
 Conceal'd in caverns in the silvan shade. 255
 Hither, intent the rival rout to slay
 And plan the scene of death, I bend my way :
 So Pallas wills ——— but thou, my son, explain
 The names, and numbers of th' audacious train ;

v. 245. *The prince thus interrupts the solemn woe.*] It does not appear at first view why the poet makes Telemachus recover himself from his transport of sorrow sooner than Ulysses : is Telemachus a greater master of his passions ? or is it to convince Ulysses of his son's wisdom, as Eustathius conjectures ? This can scarce be supposed, Ulysses being superiour in wisdom. I would chuse rather to ascribe it to human nature ; for it has been observed, that affection seldom so strongly ascends, as it descends ; the child seldom loves the father so tenderly, as the father the child : this observation has been made from the remotest antiquity. And it is wisely designed by the great Author of our natures ; for in the common course of life, the child must bury the parent ; it is therefore a merciful dispensation, that the tie of blood and affection should be loosened by degrees, and not torn violently asunder in the full strength of it. It is expected that aged persons should die, their loss therefore grows more familiar to us, and it loses much of its horror through the long expectation of it.

v. 250. *Phæacians bore me to the port assign'd.*] Here is a repetition of what the reader knows entirely, from many parts of the preceding story ; but it being necessary in this place, the poet judiciously reduces it into the compass of six lines, and by this method avoids prolixity. Eustathius.

'Tis mine to judge if better to employ — 260
 Assistant force, or singly to destroy.

O'er earth (returns the prince) resounds thy name,
 Thy well-try'd wisdom, and thy martial fame,
 Yet at thy words I start, in wonder lost;
 Can we engage, not decads, but an host? 265
 Can we alone in furious battle stand,
 Against that num'rous, and determin'd band?
 Hear then their numbers: from Dulichium came
 Twice twenty-six, all peers of mighty name,
 Six are their menial train: twice twelve the boast 270
 Of Samos; twenty from Zacynthus coast:
 And twelve our country's pride; to these belong
 Medon and Phemius skill'd in heav'nly song.
 Two sew'rs from day to day the revels wait,
 Exact of taste, and serve the feast in state. 275
 With such a foe th' unequal fight to try,
 Were by false courage unreveng'd to die.
 Then what assistant pow'rs you boast, relate,
 Ere yet we mingle in the stern debate.

Mark well my voice, Ulysses straight replies: 280
 What need of aids, if favour'd by the skies?

v. 263. *Hear then their numbers —*] According to this catalogue, the suitors with their attendants (the two sewers, and Medon, and Phemius) are a hundred and eighteen; but the two last are not to be taken for the enemies of Ulysses; and therefore are not involved in their punishment in the conclusion of the *Odyssey*. Eustathius.

Spondanus mistakes this passage egregiously.

Μέδων κῆρυξ καὶ Δείος ἀοιδός.

He understands it thus, "Medon who was a herald and a divine bard." "Præco unus qui & idem musicus:" it is true, the construction will bear this interpretation; but it is evident from the latter part of the twenty-second *Odyssey*, that the κῆρυξ and the ἀοιδός were two persons, namely, Medon and Phemius: Medon acts all along as a friend to Penelope and Telemachus, and Phemius is affirmed to be detained by the suitors involuntarily, and consequently they are both guiltless.

If shielded to the dreadful fight we move,
By mighty Pallas, and by thund'ring Jove.

Sufficient they (Telemachus rejoin'd)
Against the banded pow'rs of all mankind : 285
They, high enthron'd above the rolling clouds,
Wither the strength of man, and awe the gods.

Such aids expect, he cries, when strong in might
We rise terrific to the task of fight.

v. 288. *Such aids expect, he cries, when strong in might,
We rise terrific to the task of fight.]*

This whole discourse between Ulysses and Telemachus is introduced to prepare the reader for the catastrophe of the poem : Homer judiciously interests heaven in the cause, that the reader may not be surprised at the event, when he sees such numbers fall by the hands of these heroes ; he consults probability, and as the poem now draws to a conclusion, sets the assistance of heaven full before the reader.

It is likewise very artful to let us into some knowledge of the event of the poem ; all care must be taken that it be rather guessed than known. If it be entirely known, the reader finds nothing new to awaken his attention ; if on the contrary it be so intricate, that the event cannot possibly be guessed at, we wander in the dark, and are lost in uncertainty. The art of the poet consists not in concealing the event intirely : but when it is in some measure foreseen, in introducing such a number of incidents that now bring us almost into the sight of it, then by new obstacles perplex the story to the very conclusion of the poem ; every obstacle, and every removal of it fills us with surprise, with pleasure or pain alternately, and consequently calls up our whole attention. This is admirably described by Vida, lib. ii.

“ ——— Eventus nonnullis sæpe canendo

“ Indiciis porrò ostendunt, in luce malignâ

“ Sublustrique ; aliquid dant cernere noctis in umbrâ.”

Th' event should glimmer with a dubious ray,
Not hid in clouds nor glare in open day.

This rule he afterwards illustrates by a very happy similitude,

“ Haud aliter longinqua petit qui forte viator

“ Mænia, si positas altis in collibus arces

“ Nunc etiam dubias oculis videt, incipit ultro

“ Lætior ire viam, placidumque urgere laborem,

“ Quàm cùm nusquam ullæ cernuntur quas adit arces,

“ Obscurum sed iter tendit convallibus imis.”

But thou, when morn salutes th' aerial plain, 290
 The court revisit and the lawless train :
 Me thither in disguise Eumæus leads,
 An aged mendicant in tatter'd weeds.
 There, if base scorn insult my rev'rend age ;
 Bear it my son ! repress thy rising rage. 295
 If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel ;
 Bear it my son ! howe'er thy heart rebel.

The conduct both of Virgil and Homer are agreeable to this observation ; for instance, Anchises and Tiresias in the shades, foretel Æneas and Ulysses that all their troubles shall end prosperously, that the one shall found the Roman empire, the other regain his kingdoms ; but the means being kept concealed, our appetite is rather whetted than cloyed, to know by what means these events are brought about : thus, as in Vida's allusion, they shew us the city at a great distance, but how we are to arrive at it, by what roads they intend to guide us to it, this they keep concealed ; the journey discovers itself, and every step we advance leads us forward, and shews where we are to take the next : neither does the poet directly lead us in the straight path : sometimes we are as it were in a labyrinth, and we know not how to extricate ourselves out of it ; sometimes he carries us into bye-ways, and we almost lose sight of the direct way, and then suddenly they open into the chief road, and convey us to the journey's end. In this consists the skill of the poet ; he must form probable intricacies, and then solve them probably ; he must set his hero in dangers, and then bring him out of them with honour. This observation is necessary to be applied to all those passages in the *Odyssey*, where the event of it is obscurely foretold, and which some tasteless critics have blamed, as taking away the curiosity of the reader by an unseasonable discovery.

v. 296. *If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel,
 Bear it my son ! howe'er thy heart rebel.]*

Plutarch in his Treatise upon reading Poems, observes the wisdom of Ulysses in these instructions : he is the person who is more immediately injured, yet he not only restrains his own resentment, but that of Telemachus : he perceives that his son is in danger of flying out into some passion, he therefore very wisely arms him against it. Men do not put bridles upon horses when they are already running with full speed, but they bridle them before they bring them out to the race : this very well illustrates the conduct of Ulysses ; he fears the youth of Telemachus may be too warm, and through an unseasonable ardour at the sight of his wrongs, betray him to his enemies ; he therefore persuades him to patience

Yet strive by pray'r and counsel to restrain
 Their lawless insults, tho' thou strive in vain :
 For wicked ears are deaf to wisdom's call, 300
 And vengeance strikes whom heav'n has doom'd to fall.
 Once more attend : when she * whose pow'r inspires
 The thinking mind, my soul to vengeance fires ;
 I give the sign : that instant, from beneath,
 Aloft convey the instruments of death, 305
 Armour and arms ; and if mistrust arise,
 Thus veil the truth in plausible disguise.

" These glitt'ring weapons, ere he sail'd to Troy,
 " Ulysses view'd with stern heroic joy :
 " Then, beaming o'er th' illumin'd wall they shone :
 " Now dust dishonours, all their lustre gone. 310
 " I bear them hence (so Jove my soul inspires)
 " From the pollution of the fuming fires ;
 " Lest when the bowl inflames, in vengeful mood
 " Ye rush to arms, and stain the feast with blood ; 315
 " Oft' ready swords in luckless hour incite
 " The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight."

and calmness, and predisposes his mind with rational considerations to enable him to encounter his passions, and govern his resentment.

* Minerva.

v. 304. ——— *that instant, from beneath,
 Aloft convey the instruments of death.*]

These ten lines occur in the beginning of the nineteenth book, and the ancients as (Eustathius informs us) were of opinion, that they are here placed improperly ; for how, say they, should Ulysses know that the arms were in a lower apartment, when he was in the country, and had not yet seen his palace ? But this is no real objection ; his repository of arms he knew was in the lower apartment, and therefore it was rational to conclude that the arms were in it. The verses are proper in both places ; here Ulysses prepares Telemachus against the time of the execution of his designs ; in the nineteenth book that time is come, and therefore he repeats his instructions.

v. 316. *Oft' ready swords in luckless hour incite
 The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight.*]

Such be the plea, and by the plea deceive :
 For Jove infatuates all, and all believe.
 Yet leave for each of us a sword to wield, 320
 A pointed jav'lin, and a fenciful shield.
 But by my blood that in thy bosom glows,
 By *u.* regard a son his father owes ;
 The secret, that thy father lives, retain
 Lock'd in thy bosom from the household train ; 325
 Hide it from all ; ev'n from Eumæus hide,
 From my dear father, and my dearer bride.
 One care remains, to note the loyal few
 Whose faith yet lasts among the menial crew ;
 And noting, ere we rise in vengeance, prove 330
 Who loves his prince ; for sure you merit love.
 To whom the youth : to emulate I aim
 The brave and wise, and my great father's fame.
 But re-consider, since the wisest err,
 Veng'ance resolv'd, 'tis dang'rous to defer. 335

This seems to have been a proverbial expression, at least it has been so used by latter writers : the observation holds true to this day, and it is manifest that more men fall by the sword in countries where the inhabitants daily wear swords, than in those where a sword is thought no part of dress or ornament. Dacier.

v. 324. *The secret, that thy father lives, retain
 Lock'd in thy bosom ———]*

This injunction of secrecy is introduced by Ulysses with the utmost solemnity ; and it was very necessary that it should be so ; the whole hopes of his re-establishment depending upon it : besides, this behaviour agrees with the character of Ulysses, which is remarkable for disguise and concealment. The poet makes a further use of it ; namely, to give him an opportunity to describe at large the several discoveries made to Penelope, Laertes, and Eumæus personally by Ulysses, in the sequel of the *Odyssey*, which are no small ornaments to it ; yet must have been omitted, or have lost their effect, if the return of Ulysses had been made known by Telemachus ; this would have been like discovering the plot before the beginning of the play. At the same time this direction is an excellent rule to be observed in management of all weighty affairs, the success of which chiefly depends upon secrecy.

v. 334. *But re-consider ———]* The poet here describes Telemachus rectifying the judgment of Ulysses ; is this any disparage-

What length of time must we consume in vain,

Too curious to explore the menial train ?

While the proud foes, industrious to destroy

Thy wealth in riot, the delay enjoy.

Suffice it in this exigence alone

340

To mark the damsels that attend the throne :

Dispers'd the youth resides ; their faith to prove

Jove grants henceforth, if thou hast spoke from Jove.

While in debate they waste the hours away,

Th' associates of the prince repass'd the bay ;

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ment to that hero ? It is not ; but an exact representation of human nature ; for the wisest men may receive, in particular cases, instructions from men less wise ; and the eye of the understanding in a young man, may sometimes see further than that of age ; that is, in the language of the poet, a wise and mature Ulysses may sometimes be instructed by a young and unexperienced Telemachus.

v. 343. — *if thou hast spoke from Jove.*] The expression in the Greek is obscure, and it may be asked, to what refers Διὸς τέρας ? Dacier renders it, “ S’il vray que vous ayez vû un prodige ;” or “ if it be true that you have seen a prodigy :” now there is no mention of any prodigy seen by Ulysses in all this interview, and this occasions the obscurity ; but it is implied, for Ulysses directly promises the assistance of Jupiter ; and how could he depend upon it, but by some prodigy from Jupiter ? Eustathius thus understands the words : Τέρας, ἐξ ἧ ὁρμώμενος ἔφη ἀμύλλορα τὸν Διὸς ἡμῖν ἔσεσθαι. And then the meaning will be, “ If the prodigy from Jupiter be “ evident, there is no occasion to concern ourselves about the household train.” But then does not that expression imply doubt, and a jealousy, that Ulysses might possibly depend too much upon supernatural assistance ? It only insinuates, that he ought to be certain in the interpretation of the prodigy, but Telemachus refers himself intirely to Ulysses, and acquiesces in his judgment.

v. 345. *Th' associates of the prince repass'd the bay.*] It is manifest that this vessel had spent the evening of the preceding day, the whole night and part of the next morning, in sailing from the place where Telemachus embarked : for it is necessary to remember that Telemachus, to avoid the suitors, had been obliged to fetch a large compass, and land upon the northern coast of Ithaca ; and consequently the vessel was necessitated to double the whole isle on the western side to reach the Ithacan bay. This is the reason that it arrives not till the day afterwards, and that the herald dispatched by the associates of Telemachus, and Eumæus from the country, meet upon the road, as they go to carry the news of the

With speed they guide the vessel to the shores ;
 With speed debarking land the naval stores ;
 Then faithful to their charge, to Clytius bear,
 And trust the presents to his friendly care.
 Swift to the queen a herald flies t' impart 350
 Her son's return, and ease a parent's heart ;
 Lest a sad prey to ever-musing cares,
 Pale grief destroy what time a while forbears.

Th' uncautious herald with impatience burns,
 And cries aloud ; Thy son, oh queen, returns : 355
 Eumæus sage approach'd th' imperial throne,
 And breath'd his mandate to her ear alone,
 Then measur'd back the way — The suitor band
 Stung to the soul, abash'd, confounded stand ;
 And issuing from the dome, before the gate, 360
 With clouded looks, a pale assembly sat.

At length Eurymachus. Our hopes are vain ;
 Telemachus in triumph fails the main.

return of Telemachus to Penelope. It is likewise evident that the lodge of Eumæus was not far distant from the palace ; for he sets out toward the city after eating in the morning, and passing some time in conference with Telemachus, delivers his message, and returns in the evening of the same day.

v. 355. *And cries aloud ; Thy son, oh queen, returns.*] This little circumstance distinguishes characters, and gives variety to poetry : it is a kind of painting, which always varies its figures by some particular ornament, or attitude, so as no two figures are alike : the contrary conduct would make an equal confusion both in poetry and painting, and an indistinction of persons and characters. I will not promise that these particularities are of equal beauty as necessity, especially in modern languages ; the Greek is always flowing, sonorous, and harmonious ; the language, like leaves, oftentimes conceals barrenness, and a want of fruit, and renders the sense at least beautiful, if not profitable ; this is wanted in some degree in English poetry, where it is not always in our power to conceal the nakedness with ornaments : this particularity before us is of absolute necessity, and could not well be avoided ; the indiscretion of the herald in speaking aloud, discovers the return of Telemachus to the suitors, and is the incident that brings about their following debates, and furnishes out the entertainment of the succeeding part of this book.

Book XVI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 309

Haste, rear the mast, the swelling shroud display;
Haste, to our ambush'd friends the news convey! 365

Scarce had he spoke, when turning to the strand,
Amphinomus survey'd th' associate band;
Full to the bay within the winding shores
With gather'd sails they stood, and lifted oars.
O friends! he cry'd, elate with rising joy, 370
See to the port secure the vessel fly!

Some god has told them, or themselves survey
The bark escap'd; and measure back their way.

Swift at the word descending to the shores,
'They moor the vessel and unlade the stores: 375
'Then moving from the strand, apart they sat,
And full and frequent, form'd a dire debate.

Lives then the boy? he lives (Antinous cries)
The care of gods and fav'rite of the skies.
All night we watch'd, till with her orient wheels 380
Aurora flam'd above the eastern hills,

And from the lofty brow of rocks by day
'Took in the ocean with a broad survey:
Yet safe he fails! the pow'rs cœlestial give
To shun the hidden snares of death, and live. 385

But die he shall, and thus condemn'd to bleed,
Be now the scene of instant death decreed:
Hope ye success? undaunted crush the foe.
Is he not wise? know this, and strike the blow.

Wait ye, till he to arms in council draws 390
The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause?

v. 391. *The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause.*] This verse is inserted with great judgment, and gives an air of probability to the whole relation; for if it be asked why the suitors defer to seize the supreme power, and to murder Telemachus, they being so superiour in number? Antinous himself answers, that they fear the people, who favour the cause of Telemachus, and would revenge his injuries: it is for this reason that they formed the ambush by sea; and for this reason Antinous proposes to intercept him in his return from the country: they dare not offer open

Strike, ere the states conven'd, the foe betray
 Our murd'rous ambush on the wat'ry way.
 Or chuse ye vagrant from their rage to fly
 Outcasts of earth, to breathe an unknown sky? 395
 The brave prevent misfortune; then be brave,
 And bury future danger in his grave.
 Returns he? ambush'd we'll his walk invade,
 Or where he hides in solitude and shade:
 And give the palace to the queen a dow'r, 400
 Or him she blesses in the bridal hour.
 But if submissive you resign the sway,
 Slaves to a boy; go, flatter and obey.

violence, and therefore make use of treachery. This speech of Antinous forms a short under-plot to the poem; it gives us pain (says Eustathius) for Telemachus, and holds us in suspense till the intricacy is unravelled by Amphinomus.

The whole harangue is admirable in Homer: the diction is excellently suited to the temper of Antinous, who speaks with precipitation: his mind is in agitation and disorder, and consequently his language is abrupt, and not allowing himself time to explain his thoughts at full length, he falls into ellipses and abbreviations. For instance, he is to speak against Telemachus, but his contempt and resentment will not permit him to mention his name, he therefore calls him τὸν ἄνδρα; thus in μήτι κακὸν ῥέζωσι, δίδοιμα is understood; thus likewise in this verse,

Ἄλλ' ἄγε πρὶν κεῖνον ὀμνησῖσθαι Ἀχαιῶς

Εἰς ἀγορὴν —————

the word ὀλοθρεύσωμεν, or ἀνέλωμεν, must be understood, to make the sense intelligible. Thus also after εἰ δ' ὑμῖν ὅδε μῦθος ἀφανῆσαι, to make Ἄλλα in the next sentence begin it significantly, we must supply καὶ ὃ δοκεῖ καλὸν ὁ φόνος; then the sense is complete; "If this opinion displease, and his death appear not honourable," but you would have him live, &c. otherwise ἄλλα βέλεσθε must be construed like βέλεσθε δὲ; and lastly, to image the disorder of Antinous more strongly, Homer inserts a false quantity, by making the first syllable in βέλεσθε short. Antinous attends not, through the violence of his spirit, to the words he utters, and therefore falls into this error, which excellently represents it. It is impossible to retain these ellipses in the translation, but I have endeavoured to shew the warmth of the speaker, by putting the words into interrogations, which are always uttered with vehemence, and signs of hurry and precipitation.

Retire we instant to our native reign,
 Nor be the wealth of kings consum'd in vain; 405
 Then wed whom choice approves: the queen be giv'n
 To some blest prince, the prince decreed by heav'n.

Abash'd, the suitor train his voice attends;
 'Till from his throne Amphinomus ascends,
 Who o'er Dulichium stretch'd his spacious reign, 410
 A land of plenty, blest with ev'ry grain:
 Chief of the numbers who the queen address,
 And tho' displeasing, yet displeasing least.
 Soft were his words; his actions wisdom sway'd;
 Graceful a while he paus'd, then mildly said. 415

O friends forbear! and be the thought withstood:
 'Tis horrible to shed imperial blood!
 Consult we first th' all-seeing pow'rs above,
 And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.

v. 413. *And tho' displeasing, yet displeasing least.*] We are not to gather from this expression, that Penelope had any particular tenderness for Amphinomus, but it means only that he was a person of some justice and moderation. At first view, there seems no reason why the poet should distinguish Amphinomus from the rest of the suitors, by giving him this humane character; but in reality there is an absolute necessity for it. Telemachus is doomed to die by Antinous: here is an intricacy formed, and how is that hero to be preserved with probability? The poet ascribes a greater degree of tenderness and moderation to one of the suitors, and by this method preserves Telemachus. Thus we see the least circumstance in Homer has its use and effect; the art of a good painter is visible in the smallest sketch, as well as in the largest draught.

v. 419. *And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.*] Strabo, lib. vii. quotes this verse of Homer, and tells us that some critics thus read it,

Εἴ μὲν κ' αἰνήσωσι Διὸς μεγάλοιο τομῆροι.

preferring *τομῆροι* to *θέμιστες*; for, add they, *θέμιστες* no where in Homer signifies oracles, but constantly laws or councils. Tmarus or Tomarus was a mountain on which the oracle of Jupiter stood, and in process of time it was used to denote the oracles themselves. *Τόμυρος* is formed like the word *οἰκὸς*, the former signifies "custos Tmari," the latter "custos domus:" in this sense Amphinomus advises to consult the Dodonian oracles, which were given from the mountain Tmarus: but, adds Strabo, Homer

If they assent, ev'n by this hand he dies ; 420
 If they forbid, I war not with the skies.

He said : the rival train his voice approv'd,
 And rising instant to the palace mov'd.
 Arriv'd, with wild tumultuous noise they sat,
 Recumbent on the shining thrones of state. 425

'Then Medon, conscious of their dire debates,
 The murd'rous council to the queen relates.

is to be understood more plainly ; and by *Θέμιες*, the councils, the will and decisions of the oracles are implied, for those decisions were held as laws ; thus *βουλῇ*, as well as *Θέμιες*, signifies the Dodonian oracles.

Ἐκ δρυὸς ὑψικόμοιο Διδὸς βουλὴν ἐπάκουσαι.

Neither is it true (observes the scholiast upon Strabo) that *Θέμιες* never signifies oracles in Homer : for in the hymn to Apollo, (and Thucydides quotes that hymn as Homer's) the poet thus uses it,

———— ἀγέλλουσι Θέμιτας
 Φοίβη Ἀπόλλωνος —————

Strabo himself uses *Θεμιστείαν* in this sense, lib. xvii. and in the oracles that are yet extant, *Θεμιστεύειν* frequently signifies " oracula " reddere : " and in *Ælian* (continues the scholiast) lib. iii. chap. 43, 44. ἂν σὲ Θεμιστεύσω, signifies " non tibi oracula reddam ; " and Hesychius renders *Θέμιες*, by *μαθήϊα*, *χρήσμοι*, prophecy or oracles.

v. 426. — *Medon, conscious of their dire debates.*] After this verse Eustathius recites one that is omitted in most of the late editions as spurious, at least improper.

Ἀλλῃς ἐκτὸς ἔων, οἱ δ' ἐνδοθε μῆτιν ὕφαινον.

That is, Medon was out of the court, whereas the suitors formed their council within it : the line is really to be suspected ; for a little above, Homer directly tells us, that the suitors left the palace.

Then issuing from the dome, before the gate,
 With clouded looks, a pale assembly sat.

It is likewise very evident that they stood in the open air, for they discover the ship returning from the ambush, and sailing into the bay. How then can it be said of the suitors, that they formed their assembly in the court, οἱ δ' ἐνδοθε μῆτιν ὕφαινον. Besides, continues Dacier, they left the palace, and placed themselves under the lofty wall of it.

Touch'd at the dreadful story she descends :
 Her hasty steps a damsel-train attends.
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 130
 Sudden before the rival pow'rs she stands :
 And veiling decent with a modest shade
 Her cheek, indignant to Antinous said :

O void of faith ! of all bed men the worst !
 Renown'd for wisdom, by th' abuse accurs'd ! 435
 Mistaking fame proclaims thy gen'rous mind !
 Thy deeds denote thee of the basest kind.
 Wretch ! to destroy a prince that friendship gives,
 While in his guest his murd'rer he receives :
 Nor dread superiour Jove, to whom belong 440
 The cause of suppliants, and revenge of wrong.
 Hast thou forgot (ingrateful as thou art)
 Who sav'd thy father with a friendly part ?
 Lawless he ravag'd with his martial pow'rs
 The Taphian pirates on Thesprotia's shores ; 445
 Enrag'd, his life, his treasures they demand ;
 Ulysses sav'd him from th' avenger's hand.

Ἐκ δ' ἦλθον μεγάροιο, παρὲν μέγα τειχίον ἀλλῆς.

How then is it possible to see the ship entering the port, when this wall must necessarily obstruct the sight : the two verses therefore evidently contradict themselves, and one of them must consequently be rejected : she would have the line read thus :

Ἀλλῆς ἐνθός ἔσιν, οἱ δ' ἐκδοθε, &c.

But all the difficulty vanishes by taking Ἀλλῆ, as it is frequently used, to denote any place open to the air, and consequently not the court, but the court-yard, and this is the proper signification of the word. Then Medon may stand on the outside of the wall of the court-yard, Ἀλλῆς ἐκτός, and over-hear the debates of the suitors who form their council within it, or ἐνδοθε μῆτιν ὑφαινον. And as for the wall intercepting the view of the suitors, this is merely conjecture ; and it is more rational to imagine that the court-yard was open sea-ward, that so beautiful a prospect as the ocean might not be shut up from the palace of a king ; or at least, the palace might stand upon such an eminence as to command the ocean.

v. 447. ——— from th' avenger's band.] This whole passage is thus understood by Eustathius : by δεῖον ἀποδδίσας Homer means
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And would'st thou evil for his good repay?

His bed dishonour, and his house betray?

Afflict his queen? and with a murd'rous hand 450

Destroy his heir?—but cease, 'tis I command.

Far hence those fears (Eurymachus reply'd)

O prudent prince! bid thy soul confide.

the Ithacans; and he likewise affirms that the people who demanded vengeance of Ulysses were also the Ithacans. It is not here translated in this sense, the construction rather requires it to be understood of the Thesprotians, who were allies of Ulysses, and by virtue of that alliance demanded Eupithes, the father of Antinous, out of the hands of Ulysses. But I submit to the reader's judgment.

v. 449. *His bed dishonour, and his house betray?*

Afflict his queen? &c.]

It is observable, that Penelope in the compass of two lines recites four heads of her complaint; such contractions of thought and expression being natural to persons in anger, as Eustathius observes; she speaks with heat, and consequently starts from thought to thought with precipitation. The whole speech is animated with a generous resentment, and she concludes at once like a mother and a queen; like a mother, with affection for Telemachus; and like a queen, with authority, *παύσασθαι κέλομαι*.

v. 452. ——— (*Eurymachus reply'd.*)] This whole discourse of Eurymachus is to be understood by way of contrariety: there is an obvious and a latent interpretation; for instance, when he says,

His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear;

it obviously means the blood of the person who offers violence to Telemachus; but it may likewise mean the blood of Telemachus, and the construction admits both interpretations: thus also when he says, that no person shall lay hands upon Telemachus, while he is alive, he means that he will do it himself: and lastly, when he adds,

Then fear no mortal arm: if heav'n destroy,
We must resign; for man is born to die.

The apparent signification is, that Telemachus has occasion only to fear a natural death; but he means if the oracle of Jupiter commands them to destroy Telemachus, that then the suitors will take away his life. He alludes to the foregoing speech of Amphinomus:

Book XVI. HOMER's ODYSSEY. 315

Breathes there a man who dares that hero slay,
While I behold the golden light of day? 455

No: by the righteous pow'rs of heav'n I swear,
His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear.

Ulysses, when my infant days I led,
With wine suffic'd me, and with dainties fed:
My gen'rous soul abhors th' ungrateful part, 460
And my friend's son lives dearest to my heart.

Then fear no mortal arm: if heav'n destroy,
We must resign: for man is born to die.

Thus smooth he ended, yet his death conspir'd:
Then sorrowing, with sad step the queen retir'd, 465
With streaming eyes all comfortless deplor'd,
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of her lord;
Nor ceas'd, 'till Pallas bid her sorrows fly,
And in soft slumber seal'd her flowing eye.

And now Eumæus, at the ev'ning hour, 470
Came late returning to his silvan bow'r.
Ulysses and his son had dress'd with art

A yearling boar, and gave the gods their part,
Holy repast! That instant from the skies
The martial goddess to Ulysses flies: 475

She waves her golden wand, and reassumes
From ev'ry feature ev'ry grace that blooms;
At once his vestures change; at once she sheds
Age o'er his limbs, that tremble as he treads.
Lest to the queen the swain with transport fly, 480
Unable to contain th' unruly joy.

When near he drew, the prince breaks forth; proclaim
What tidings, friends? what speaks the voice of fame?
Say, if the suitors measure back the main,
Or still in ambush thirst for blood in vain? 485

Consult we first th' all-seeing pow'rs above,
And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.
If they assent, ev'n by this hand he dies;
If they forbid, I war not with the skies. Eustathius.

Whether, he cries, they measure back the flood,
 Or still in ambush thirst in vain for blood,
 Escap'd my care: where lawless suitors sway,
 Thy mandate borne, my soul disdain'd to stay.
 But from th' Hermæan height I cast a view, 490
 Where to the port a bark high bounding flew;

v. 490. — *from th' Hermæan height* —] It would be superfluous to translate all the various interpretations of this passage; it will be sufficiently intelligible to the reader, if he looks upon it only to imply that there was an hill in Ithaca called the Hermæan hill, either because there was a temple, statue, or altar of Mercury upon it; and so called from that deity.

It has been written that Mercury being the messenger of the gods, in his frequent journeys cleared the roads, and when he found any stones he threw them in an heap out of the way, and these heaps were called *ἑρμαῖαι*, or Mercuries. The circumstance of his clearing the roads is somewhat odd; but why might not Mercury as well as Trivia preside over them, and have his images erected in public ways, because he was supposed to frequent them as the messenger of the gods?

This book takes up no more time than the space of the thirty-eighth day; for Telemachus reaches the lodge of Eumæus in the morning, a little after he dispatches Eumæus to Penelope, who returns in the evening of the same day. The book in general is very beautiful in the original; the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus is particularly tender and affecting: it has some resemblance with that of Joseph's discovery of himself to his brethren, and it may not perhaps be disagreeable to see how two such authors describe the same passion,

“ I am Joseph, I am your brother Joseph.”

“ I am Ulysses, I, my son! am he!”

“ And he wept aloud, and he fell on his brother's neck and wept.”

“ He wept abundant, and he wept aloud.”

But it must be owned that Homer falls infinitely short of Moses: he must be a very wicked man, that can read the history of Joseph without the utmost touches of compassion and transport. There is a majestic simplicity in the whole relation, and such an affecting portrait of human nature, that it overwhelms us with vicissitudes of joy and sorrow. This is a pregnant instance how much the best of heathen writers is inferior to the divine historian upon a parallel subject, where the two authors endeavour to move the softer passions. The same may with equal truth be said

Her freight a shining band: with martial air
Each pois'd his shield, and each advanc'd his spear:
And if aright these searching eyes survey,
Th' eluded suitors stem the wat'ry way. 495

The prince, well pleas'd to disappoint their wiles,
Steals on his sire a glance, and secret smiles.
And now a short repast prepar'd, they fed,
'Till the keen rage of craving hunger fled:
Then to repose withdrawn, apart they lay, 500
And in soft sleep forgot the cares of day.

in respect to sublimity; not only in the instance produced by Longinus, viz. "Let there be light, and there was light. Let the earth be made, and the earth was made:" but in general, in the more elevated parts of scripture, and particularly the whole book of Job; which, with regard both to sublimity of thought, and morality, exceeds beyond all comparison the most noble parts of Homer.

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